ASGER OUSAGER

PLOTINUS
ON SELFHOOD, FREEDOM AND POLITICS

AARHUS UNIVERSITY PRESS

Aarhus Studies in
Mediterranean Antiquity
(ASMA)

VI

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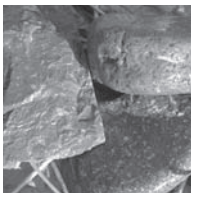


PLOTINUS
ON SELFHOOD, FREEDOM AND POLITICS

Acta Jutlandica LXXIX:1
Humanities Series 76

AARHUS UNIVERSITY PRESS

Plotinus on Selfhood, Freedom and Politics
© Asger Ousager 2005
Cover and layout: Lotte Bruun Rasmussen
Structures of Scandinavian porphyry
Photo: Asger Ousager
The "Plotinus sarcophagus", Gregorian Profane Museum, Vatican
Photo: A. Bracchetti, Vatican Museums 13163
Typeset with Trajan (cover) and Minion (body)

ISBN 87 7934 913 7
ISSN 0065 1354 (Acta Jutlandica)
ISSN 0106 0556 (Humanities Series)

Aarhus University Press
Langelandsgade 177
DK-8200 Aarhus N
Fax: +45 89425380
www.unipress.dk

Til
Bent og Gerda

Contents

Introduction 9
Selfhood 9
Freedom 11
Politics 12

Part I. SELFHOOD 15

Chapter I.A. Unification with Soul 19

Chapter I.B. Unification with Intellect 23
I.B.1. Memories of the body 24
I.B.2. Potentiality or actuality of Intellect? 26
I.B.2.a. Actualisation of Intellect 28
I.B.2.b. Actualisation of Forms 29
I.B.2.c. A failing criterion 29
I.B.3. Forms of particulars within Intellect 32
I.B.4. Intentionality within Intellect 39
I.B.5. The gaze of souls 42
I.B.6. *In-esse* and determinism 45
I.B.7. Is Intellect unified? 54

Chapter I.C. Unification with the One 57
I.C.1. Envisioning the One 57
I.C.2. The One within 71
I.C.3. Inferences from Proclus and Augustine 91
I.C.4. Annihilation or preservation? 94
I.C.4.a. Preservation of particularity 94
I.C.4.b. Annihilation of the particular self 95
I.C.5. Unity or plurality first? 104

Part II. FREEDOM 121

Chapter II.A. Sufficient reason behind causes 123
II.A.1. Reason and cause in Plato and Plotinus 126
II.A.2. *Causa sui* or *ratio sui*? 129
II.A.3. Plotinus interpreting the *Euthyphro* 137
II.A.4. Sufficient Providence 143

Chapter II.B. Distinguishable souls 149

Chapter II.C. Determinism disrupted 157
II.C.1. The causal nexus of ultimate unification 157
II.C.2. Absolute freedom attained 162
II.C.3. Two concepts of necessity 165
II.C.4. Determinism put into perspective 171
II.C.5. The absolute Self 172
II.C.6. Self-determination, self-causation and self-motion 177
II.C.7. Puppets, slaves or assistants? 181

Part III. POLITICS 189

Chapter III.A. Coming to imperial Rome 193

Chapter III.B. Political philosophy 211
III.B.1. The king 214
III.B.2. Inequality of worth 225
III.B.3. The general 228
III.B.4. The legislator 231
III.B.5. War 237
III.B.6. Power and wealth 241
III.B.7. The city-state 249
III.B.8. Homeland and empire 258
III.B.9. Dialogue, democracy and human rights 264
III.B.9.a. Gender, sex and love 270
III.B.10. Efforts of individuals 274

Chapter III.C. The "Plotinus sarcophagus" 285
III.C.1. The chair of Plotinus? 289
III.C.2. Emperor Gallienus in the chair? 307
III.C.3. The iconographic touch of Plotinianism 318

Conclusion 319

Literature 321
Ancient and medieval authors with translations 321
Modern authors 326

Index of passages 353

General index 385

Introduction

Selfhood

What is an individual according to Plotinus, and is the individual (pre)-determined or free?

My investigation tries to answer these essential questions by first analysing what distinguishes persons from each other. Plotinus raises this issue several times and it is also presented as a peculiar Plotinian problem by several scholars, for instance, Étienne Vacherot, Henry Blumenthal and most recently Gabriela Carone and Richard Sorabji. The difficulty has three subsections:

A. If particular souls are all parts of Soul and are, in one phase of their mystical ascent at least, to be identified with the Soul as such, what still differentiates them from each other?

B. If human souls with their particular intellects are all parts of Intellect and are, in a following phase of their mystical ascent at least, to be identified with the Intellect as such, what still differentiates them from each other?

C. Again, if they all in some way participate in the One and may possibly, as an end stage of their mystical ascent, be identified with the One as such, what still differentiates them from each other?

In a loose manner of speaking, the body is the answer to the first question, since particular bodies both demand and presuppose particular souls, which are prior to the bodies. Particular human souls, which, *as* human, will all have particular intellects, originate *as* intellects from Intellect as such.

The fact that these souls have particular intellects is the answer to the second question, because the particular intellect is at the same time a Form of the particular soul, no matter when or where it is embodied. This criterion is, for instance, what fundamentally distinguishes "identical" twins, even if we suppose they have apparently identical bodies and, in the same vein, apparently identical souls. The Form of the particular, which is at the same time an intellect, has its particular angle of intentionality within Intellect and upon the One. This Form determines the descents and ascents of the particular person in the cycles of reincarnation.

Ascent is, ultimately, directed towards unification with the One, because the One is the only thing that can really unify the soul. Plotinus considers this premise a tautology. Only in so far as the human soul becomes the One is a human being really an individual in the literal sense. The One is therefore the real Self of any human being. Against the interpretations of Jean Trouillard, Pierre Hadot and Dominic O'Meara and in support of a previous view put forward by John Rist, I will provide plausible evidence that the autobiographical sketch of Plotinus in IV.8.1 indicates unification with the One, and not only with Intellect. In the less autobiographical speculations, especially in VI.9, these stages of unification are generalised as options for the whole of mankind. Against the "theistic" interpretations of René Arnou, Rist, Arthur Hilary Armstrong, Blumenthal, Gerard O'Daly and Hadot among others, it is shown that duality cannot be preserved at this stage.

Instead, in support of Plato Mamo's "monistic" thesis of unification in Plotinus, it is shown that in ultimate unification, particularity must be completely dissolved by unification with the One. The text indicates that such complete unification is possible. It does not let the particular intellect, the particular soul and the particular body disappear at once, for the One continuously recreates particulars. Not the particular soul, but only its previous selves have been obliterated and replaced by the Self of the One.

Just as the text indicates a stage of indistinguishability of the human self and the One, it also indicates the stages of ascent before and descent right after ultimate unification as stages of vision involving an object outside the subject. This kind of vision is superseded by ultimate unification.

Since ultimate unification is possible, there must be some element corresponding to the One inherent in the human soul. In fact, Plotinus says that all three original "natures" are within the human soul, i.e. encompassing the One. The One is potentially within everything, but the human soul can also actualise this potentiality by ascent. The probability that such a doctrine is present in Plotinus is strengthened by its occurrence in Proclus, a late Neo-

platonist follower of Plotinus, and by the probable Christian transformation of the original Plotinian doctrine into Augustine's doctrine of the image of the whole Trinity within the human soul.

Against widespread Aristotelian prejudices concerning the interpretation of Plotinus in this connection, most succinctly exhibited by Carone and Sorabji, I conclude that in Plotinus, the point of distinction between human souls from each other is not plurality within the sensible world, but the very opposite. The point of departure for this distinction is not even Intellect but rather the indistinguishability within the One. The One within the particular human soul is derived directly from the One Itself.

Freedom

Given that human souls have their origin directly in the One, what, then, distinguishes them from each other? There has to be a sufficient reason for the distinction. The One itself is not only the ultimate cause (*aition*) of everything, but also the ultimate reason (*aitia*) for everything including itself, according to Plotinus' interpretation of Plato, which he formulates as a response to the problem surrounding the relation between arbitrary will and modal necessity in the *Euthyphro*. I argue that Hadot's thesis of the One in Plotinus as a cause of itself (*causa sui*) on the other hand, is unwarranted.

Providence is the name of the sufficient reason that governs everything flown from the One towards the best, i.e. towards unification. In order to avoid indistinctness with the resulting identity of human souls in only one human soul, it would be necessary for the preference (*proairesis*) of each soul to be different from that of any other soul from the very beginning. Consequently, the series of resulting choices and dispositions of souls will be quite different from each other. The series and the decisive beginning of the series are contained within the Form of the particular soul. Providence also determines which human souls will ascend to ultimate unification with the One. Human unification with the necessary determinant, namely the One as "absolute freedom", must have indeterministic causal consequences for the whole causal hierarchy. In particular, such indeterministic causal consequences will follow for the human soul attaining ultimate unification, as the determinism of Providence again determining the Form of the particular is disrupted by this intervention. This Form will, however, be recreated and adjusted to the new state of affairs generated from ultimate freedom, as the human soul

must descend again. Here, Plotinus is probably giving what he believed to be the Platonic answer to the problem surrounding the relation between self-determination and determinism discussed by the Stoics and Alexander of Aphrodisias – a discussion most recently scrutinised by Susanne Bobzien. Plotinus denies self-determination of the One and consequently the One as a *causa sui* because this premise would restrict the One's absolute measure of freedom. Instead he affirms human self-determination as derived from that absolute freedom.

Politics

These views on ascents into and descents out of absolute freedom have political implications for exterior freedom as well. Against the still pervasive traditional view of Plotinus as apolitical, I set out to present all existing evidence and indications for a political philosophy in Plotinus.

The benevolent Providence consisting of material conditions and political circumstances behind the development of Plotinus' quite comprehensive philosophy is discussed first. According to Plato's broad definition of politics as the art (*technê*) of the soul, Plotinus' philosophy is no doubt political. It implies references to the One as the king and to Providence as the general and the legislator, all of which are presented as ideals for human social conduct and legislation in a sensible world at war with itself. Although it is not straight away manifested in the social order, there is an order relying on the basic inequality of the merits and value of persons according to their descents and ascents. Plotinus' views on the acquisition of power and wealth are likewise spiritualised but indicate, after all, some conservative and libertarian values against, for instance, the abstract egalitarianism of the Gnostics. These conservative values encompass an adherence to the rule of law and opposition to tyrannical imperialism. He presents the ideal of a mixed constitution with elements of kingship, aristocracy and democracy.

The basic element that distinguishes the political philosophy of Plotinus from that of Plato as well as Aristotle is the emphasis he places on natural authority, mutual cooperativeness and the immense potential of everybody, even slaves. His political philosophy deals with the theoretical relation noted in previous parts of the book between determinism and freedom as manifesting itself in the corresponding practical relation between oppression and liberation. A tension pointed out within Plotinus' system is, in the end, the opposition

between the pressure for historical development on the one hand, and the eternal, ahistorical structure of the henological hierarchy on the other.

On the basis of different suggestions to interpretation of the so-called Plotinus sarcophagus, the book closes with a brief survey of the archaeological evidence for the direct social and political impact of Plotinus' thought in his own age.

* * *

The study describes an arc beginning in the particular bodily self, with its apex in the ascent to the absolute and culminating in the consequences of enlightened descent.

With references, I argue that Plotinus is presenting an updated, systematic interpretation of certain patterns in Plato's thought, an interpretation that is neither unintelligible nor unintelligent. A few sharp logical principles traditionally ascribed to Leibniz are shown to be valid in an interpretation of Plotinus, simply because these principles established so pedagogically by Leibniz in modern philosophy were ingenuously deduced from Plotinus. An understanding of this quite simple but far-reaching logic is essential if the systematic concerns of Plotinus are to be properly understood.

In this study, I draw upon extensive research already carried out by other scholars, without which the conclusions of the present book would have been that much harder for me to draw. A treatment of some remaining thorny issues in present Plotinus scholarship has proven indispensable in order to reach well-founded conclusions. Another related reason for me to consult many researchers is that, within any branch of knowledge, any criticism is more useful than neglect.

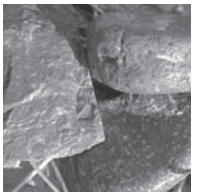
While appreciating the decisive advice of my domestic mentor, Professor Karsten Friis Johansen at the University of Copenhagen over the years, my thanks go also to Professors Mary Margaret McCabe and Richard R.K. Sorabji for their comments on previous editions of the last part, but most of all to Doctor Peter S. Adamson, who emerged from the mist in time to become my supervisor for the whole PhD thesis. It was revised for re-presentation, freely drawing on the constructive recommendations of both my examiners, Doctor Peter Gallagher, Heythrop College London, and Professor Dominic J. O'Meara, University of Fribourg, Switzerland. Publication of the treatment of mainly political and social aspects of Plotinianism was encouraged by Professor Peter Brown, Princeton University, New Jersey. Subsequently, the manuscript was obligingly commended for publication in the series of Aarhus Studies of

Mediterranean Antiquity by Professor Per Bilde and Doctors Anders Klostergaard Petersen and Jens Krasilnikoff, Chairman of the Centre for the Study of Antiquity. Concurrently, it was accepted into the series of Acta Jutlandica by the Learned Society under guidance of its president, Professor Niels Henrik Gregersen. Professor Niels Hannestad, also at Aarhus University, brought a needed critical stance to the last, archaeological chapter.

For essential contributions to revising my English I am furthermore indebted to David Levy, Anne Harrow, Devin Henry and, last but definitely not least, Julian Thorsteinson, the principal linguistic reviser of the book. To ease reading, all Greek (and Russian) words, including quotes and titles of modern publications, have been transliterated and all Greek and Latin words, except for common expressions and titles of sources, have been translated.

Publication with a final linguistic revision of the manuscript has been supported by the Danish Research Council for the Humanities. The original thesis submitted at King's College in 2001 was made possible due to a generous grant from the Danish Research Academy and to Goodenough College, which gave me shelter the last two years while in London. This book, however, is dedicated to my loving parents, who supported me all the way through.

Part I



SELFHOOD

There can be no doubt that Plotinus suggests some sort of unification of the self with Soul, with Intellect and at a third stage, with the One. The conceptions of these unifications have varied, however, mainly as to whether unification with the One should be conceived of in theistic or monistic terms. A consequence of the first option will be that the human self is preserved during and after unification, while in the second instance, it appears that the self will be annihilated. In the following analysis of what distinguishes human selves from each other and what ultimately makes them selves, we do not need to imply any connotations by using the convenient terms "theistic" and "monistic" beyond this essential distinction.[1]

In Plotinus, we should not expect that the choice between these two widely different interpretations is a matter of arbitrary, mystical inclination only. We must therefore reconsider the controversial texts where unification is suggested in order to place them in their philosophical context. While Plotinus naturally discusses different issues in different passages, in the following I make what I take to be a fairly fertile assumption, namely, that his philosophical concerns are essentially the same throughout his work. If a consistent interpretation of his views based on that hypothesis is possible, it will confirm, if not prove, the hypothesis. This approach implies that none of his treatises will be considered as standing apart from the others, and that suggestions drawn from elsewhere

1. By adopting this approach, we circumvent the reluctance expressed by Bussanich (1988) 192, Bussanich (1994) 5326-28 and Bussanich (1997) 364-65 to use these terms due to worries over traditional, but in this context extraneous, connotations.

in the corpus can be assumed to shed light on any particularly difficult passages. This was the way Plotinus read Plato in his efforts to systematise Platonism. We should try to interpret Plotinus bearing his systematic approach in mind. Such a "unitarian" approach is not tantamount to becoming a "partisan" of Plotinian Neoplatonism. Simple attentiveness to the unity of thought is a precondition for understanding any thinker.

Let us take a preliminary glance at what Plotinus thinks is implied philosophically by a unification with Soul and then Intellect before moving on to unification with the One.

Chapter I.A

Unification with Soul

Plotinus believes that all human souls, like souls in general, originate from a common World Soul or from Soul as such (e.g., IV.3.1.16-37, IV.3.7, IV.8.6.1-6, IV.9.4.6-20, III.5.3.36-38, I.1.8.8-15, VI.2.5.10), cf. *Timaeus* (34b-c, 41d-42e), *Philebus* (30a-b), *Laws* (892a-893b, 896d-e). The particular soul is not cut off from that whole Soul, on the contrary (III.5.4.10-12, III.7.13.66-69, IV.4.32.4-13, IV.9.1.6-13). He therefore raises the question in VI.4.14.1 (cf. VI.4.4.1-4, IV.9.1.13-23):

> But if it is the same Soul in each and every place, how is it peculiar (*idia*) in each particular soul?

The body is in a way what differentiates particular souls from each other, since particular bodies, "which are different from each other and in different places" (IV.2[4].1.60-61) and will each have their particular movement (IV.9.2.1-12 & 21-24, IV.7.5.1-2, II.9.7.7-11), both need and presuppose particular souls (IV.4.5.18-21, cf. *Timaeus* 89e) that direct, preserve and take care of the particular bodies (IV.8.2.6-14, IV.3.6.7-8 & 11-15). Within the sphere of Soul and its subordinate kind of necessity (cf. *Republic* 616c) called Fate (*heimarmenê*, cf. *Timaeus* 41e, *Laws* 904c),[2] humans will also be different because of their particular fortunes (*tûchais*), parents, seasons and places of birth and upbringing (V.7.2.1-15, IV.3.15.7-9, II.3.15.5-8, cf. *Metaphysics* 1021a21-25,

2. Cf. Graeser (1972) 108.

1071a20-24). These elements, as well as innate character and resulting behaviour (IV.3.8.5-9), correspond to the external, mortal, bodily part of particular souls. There is another, immortal part of them to which belongs ascent from the bodily to the divine and to themselves (II.3.9, cf. *Timaeus* 41c-d, 42e, 69c-d, 90b-c). Likewise, we are told that an essential difference from "themselves" makes them react quite differently to identical circumstances (IV.3.15.4-15, II.9.13.22-25, cf. III.4.6.8-10 & 46-60). We are now to investigate what that from "themselves" actually is.[3]

As will become clearer below, the faculty of making different particular movements is a decisive criterion for distinction (IV.7.5.2-7, VI.2.6.13-16). It is, for instance, this faculty that makes the soul capable of any ascent to Intellect and to the One. The particular human soul is also able to ascend to Soul as such. This faculty is not just the passive sympathy of all souls standing in potential mutual compassion with each other, such as is demonstrated by the actual power of magic for Plotinus. He merely uses that kind of soulful compassion as additional evidence for Soul being the common source of all souls (IV.9.3.1-9, IV.3.8.1-4, IV.4.32.13-25, IV.4.45.1-24, V.1.2, II.3.7.16-25, cf. the possibly spurious II.3.12.30-32).[4] The emotional peculiarities of the particular soul are preserved, though they will certainly either be consciously or unconsciously influenced by other particular souls and by Soul as such. However, the soul must experience unification with Soul as much as it must unify with Intellect and the One to reach perfection. For while discussing other matters in V.1.12.8-10, Plotinus says in passing that "we" human beings are not just a part of soul but the whole soul. The whole particular soul is probably meant first of all in that connection, but Plotinus shows that he considers the comment valid also for the particular souls' relation to the Soul as such, cf. IV.3.7.14-18 referring to the *Phaedrus* (246b-c):

> What could it be, then, which directs the nature of body, and either shapes it or sets it in order or makes it, except soul? And it is not the case that one soul is naturally able to do this, but the other is not. Plato says, then, that the "perfect" soul, the Soul of the All, "walks on high", and does not come down, but, as we may say, rides upon the universe and creates (*poiei*) in it; and this is the manner of direction of every soul which is perfect.

3. Especially in this part 'I. Selfhood' and the next, 'II. Freedom'.
4. This level of mutual connectedness of souls is described excellently by Bussanich (1994) 5305-10. Cf. also Phillips (1983).

Similar reports on unification with Soul or the World Soul or rather both are stated in I.7.3.9, III.2.4.9-11, IV.3.2.58-59, IV.3.12.8-12, IV.8.2.19-26, IV.8.4.5-10 and V.8.7.25-35.[5] In the last-mentioned passage, it is even promised (V.8.7.35) that when the initiate in this way "comes to belong to the whole, he makes (*poiei*) the whole".[6] As we have seen above (IV.3.7.15-18), this should in principle be possible for all souls.

The reverse process of particularisation is described as the disadvantage or even disaster of sinking deeply into the particulars, losing the soul's feathers and instead acquiring the fetters of the body (IV.8.4.10-35, cf. IV.3.6.24-27), cf. respectively the *Phaedrus* (246c-e, 248b-c) and the *Phaedo* (62b, 66a-67b). Particularisation can only be preliminarily overcome by unification with the higher part of Soul, which we are told is the only one sufficiently united as one Soul (IV.9.5.3-7). In this unification process, at the stage of the World Soul we are like a gardener who cares for a plant, which Plotinus uses as a metaphor for the world. Our embodiment is compared to the rotten part of the plant suffering from maggots (IV.3.4.26-33), which are presumably symbols of exterior forces that risk taking over the human soul from the inside as well. They correspond to forces of unduly worldly particularisation in different respects. The souls that, partly due to these forces, stay behind in the world, are considered souls of third rank (IV.3.6.27-34, cf. III.2.18.3-5). The best of these souls will unite with Soul as such, "for, in spite of everything, the soul always possesses something transcendent (*hûperechon ti*) in some way" (IV.8.4.30-31), or even (IV.8.8.17-18) possesses "the Transcendent (*to hûperechon*)". A further ascent is possible, for as Plotinus says (V.1.2.11-14):

> Let it look at the great Soul, being itself another soul which is no small one, which has become worthy (*allê psûchê ou smikra axia*) to look by being freed from deceit and the things that have bewitched the other souls, and is established as thorough Stillness in Quietude (*hêsûchôi têi katastasêi*).

5. As distinct from Hadot (1980) 245, who rightly says that unification with the One is not the only kind of unification in Plotinus but who only mentions unification with Intellect as another kind. Also as distinct from Bussanich (1994) 5310 n. 25: "I do not argue that Plotinus thinks the soul merges with the physical universe or even the World-Soul." This latter kind of unification is further investigated in section 'III.B.1. The king' below.
6. As distinct from Kélessidou-Galanou (1971) 395, who believes this passage concerns unification with the One. The One cannot be a whole, however. Cf. further discussion in section 'I.C.2. The One within' below.

As human souls, souls of the third rank could not be excluded in principle from this further ascent, but unlike souls of the second and first rank, they have excluded themselves from further ascent to Intellect and the One, respectively. That choice forms the basis of the tripartition of souls.[7] Whether the choice itself could after all be predetermined will be discussed further below. We must first investigate whether any kind of distinction between souls could still be implied during unification with Intellect, and if so, what kind of distinction it is.

7. Other tripartitions of souls are to be found in Plotinus, for example I.3.1.8-9, as further investigated by Schniewind (2000b) 53-54 and Schniewind (2003) *passim*. However, it appears to me that they are subordinate to the tripartition of souls found in, e.g., IV.3.6.27-34. Cf. further discussion in section 'I.C.2. The One within' below.

Chapter I.B

Unification with Intellect

In one of Plotinus' earliest treatises (IV.8[6].1), he begins by referring to one of his frequent (*pollakis*) experiences of unification with Intellect. He says, "Often I have awoken into myself out of the body", knowing that the self will rather be at the level of Intellect than at the level of the soul's embodiment (cf. I.6.6.13-18, V.3.4.9-10 & 20-30). Moreover, he says that he has "become the same as the divine (*tôi theiôi eis tauton gegenêmenos*)". We will hold off for the time being our discussion of whether this is unification with Intellect only or includes unification with the One as well. The Stillness (*stasin*) he claims to have experienced in the divine will in any case be found as a Form only in Intellect, and he explicitly describes the following descent back from Intellect (*ek nou*, IV.8.1.8) to discursive reasoning on the level of Soul. His personal testimony of a level of intuitive thought (*noêsis*) in Intellect attainable at least temporarily confirms similar views expressed by Plato. Although traces of the distinction between intuitive thought and discursive reasoning can be found elsewhere in Plato, as in the analogy of the divided line in the *Republic* (511d-e) and in the distinction between two different intellectual capacities of Soul in the *Timaeus* (36e-37c),[8] it is evident that Plotinus primarily refers to the myth in the *Phaedrus* (246a-257b).

According to Plotinus (IV.8.1.1-11), human souls will have to leave Intellect again at some point for discursive – i.e. sequential – reasoning in the same way as was pointed out in the *Phaedrus* (247d-248b). Plotinus' reading

8. According to Jäger (1967) 33, 35, 40 in Plato, *dianoia* and *logismos* direct themselves to things in time, while *noein* and *ennoein* direct themselves to the timeless and non-sensible.

of the *Phaedrus* suggests that one remains oneself even when participating temporarily in the cyclical motion of Intellect (cf. *Timaeus* 37c, 39d-e, 47b-c, *Laws* 897c-898b) – like a dancer in a choir around a supreme god (VI.9.1.32, VI.9.8.36-VI.9.9.1, VI.9.11.17, cf. *Phaedrus* 247a, 252d). According to the *Phaedrus* (248a), one can at least for a while become like one of the gods in the cyclical motion, but even the ordinary gods themselves have souls with "charioteers" and "horses" (246a-b). In other words, in Plato, not even gods – in the plural – become completely identical with Intellect in a sense that would annihilate their particularity. According to his follower Plotinus as well, humans retain their distinctiveness during the movements of Intellect (I.8.7.12-16), although not as embodied men obviously (VI.4.4.37-39, cf. V.8.7.31-35). Indeed, they do continue to be distinct persons after unification of their particular intellects with Intellect, cf. IV.3[27].5.1-9:

> But how will there still be one particular soul which is yours, one which is the soul of this particular man, and one which is another's? Are they the souls of particular persons in the lower order, but belong in the higher order to that higher unity? But this will mean that Socrates, and the soul of Socrates, will exist as long as he is in the body; but he will cease to be precisely when he attains to the very best. Now no real being ever ceases to be; since the intellects there too are not dissolved into a unity because they are not corporeally divided, but each remains distinct in Difference, having the same essential being. So too it is with souls […].

But how can they still be different? For when affirming that they are different, Plotinus raises the question of how persons could distinguish themselves from Intellect and how they could then distinguish themselves from each other within Intellect.

I.B.1. Memories of the body

Obviously, in the passage quoted above, Plotinus denies that bodies on their own are enough to distinguish persons. For then the immortality for which Socrates searched in the *Phaedo* would already have to be given up when the soul leaves the body and the body consequently vanishes step-by-step (IV.4.29.1-7, cf. IV.4.14.6-8, II.4.14.12-16, VI.4.10.1-22, IV.5.7.56-62, *Phaedo*

80c, 117e-118a). Instead of giving in to materialism, in this treatise Plotinus discusses at length a purely psychological criterion that is, however, connected with the body, namely the soul's memory (*mnêmê*) of its bodily life. Such memory can be neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for distinctions, for the memories of embodiments disappear after a while in pure Intellect (IV.3.27.16-23, IV.4.1.1-11, IV.4.2.1-3). At the same time, Plotinus' discussion confirms what Aristotle said in *On the Soul* (430a23-25) about memories from the passive intellect perishing in the active intellect.

The vanishing of the soul's memories of its bodily life does not completely preclude the already embodied soul from having memories once it arrives at Intellect or while within Intellect. The sort of memories it will still collect, however, will be decisive for its ensuing fate resulting from whether it directs its awareness towards Intellect or towards the sensible world (cf. IV.4.3.1-6), i.e. whether it is thinking non-discursively (*noein*) or just exercising imagination (*phantasia*). Plotinus uses the Aristotelian term almost synonymously with opinion (*doxa*) of the sensible order in the analogy of the divided line of Plato's *Republic* (510a) that certainly also refers to things imagined (*phantasmata*, cf. *Parmenides* 165d). According to Plotinus, then (IV.4.3.6), the soul "is and becomes what it remembers" just as (IV.3.8.15-16) "different souls look at different things and are and become what they look at".

If the soul continued to have memories from its embodied life in Intellect, they would presumably not be bodily memories but rather intellectual memories. Still, memory is not the best thing (IV.4.4.6-7), for, as Plotinus announces (IV.3.32.13), "the more it presses on towards the heights the more it will forget". "What will the soul remember when it becomes alone (*monê*)?" he asks (IV.3.27.14-15 & 23-24), i.e. when the soul ultimately becomes alone as is the One. When he remarks in the same instance that multiplicity must be abandoned in favour of unity, he suggests that any multitude of memories must finally be abandoned (IV.3.32.13-24).

It turns out that Plotinus (IV.3.25.31-38) opposes bodily memory to unification with Intellect, considered as the recollection (*anamnêsis*) elaborated by Plato in the *Meno* (80e-86c), the *Phaedo* (72e-77a), the *Phaedrus* (249c) and the *Philebus* (34a-c). It would then be premature to expect that amnesia alone could cause the vanishing of distinctions between persons.[9] For instance, even

9. As distinct from Blumenthal (1971b) 61, cf. point made in the preface by Leibniz (1703-05) 58 and in II, i, § 14 and II, xxvii, § 9 against Locke (1689) in the corresponding paragraphs.

though a great deal of particular character and behaviour is only innate to the concrete compound of soul and body, some particular characteristics and peculiarities of behaviour can remain with the soul coming to pure Intellect, while, on the other hand, certain passions will have to fade away (IV.4.5.18-21). Memory seems to be such a passion or even the bearer of those passions. It cannot explain the particularity of each soul, which was there before any of its memory (IV.4.5.11-13). If memory cannot be the criterion of the soul's particularity, however, what about recollection?

I.B.2. Potentiality or actuality of Intellect?

Plotinus' whole point in equating the unification of the human soul with Intellect and Platonic recollection (V.3.2.9-14, V.9.5.32) is that any unification with Intellect (cf. VI.7.36.3-10) is really a reunification (cf. V.2.2.9, III.7.11.1-4, III.7.12.19-22, III.7.13.62-63).[10] For the original, beautiful, real man is a knowing man (V.8.2.45-46, V.8.13.19-22) and ignorance is only incidental to him (II.5.2.20-22), so the real man must belong to the knowing Intellect (VI.7.6.11-12). The problem seems to remain, however, if we are all reunified with Intellect, for (VI.6.15.13-15):

> […] in Intellect, in so far as it is Intellect, all the intellects exist particularly (*kath' hekaston*) as parts (*merê*); but then there is a number of these also.

How can these particular intellects, each connected with its own particular soul (cf. V.2.2.9), be distinguished from each other (V.3.2.14-22)? Could a criterion for a distinction between particular persons be found in a distinction between different actualisations of their intellects (cf. I.8.2.18-21, V.9.5.1-4)? For men are definitely not equally rational (VI.7.9.14-15).

Plotinus' discussion draws upon the philosophies of both Plato and Aristotle. In Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* (cf. 71a29-30), a solution is presented to the paradox presented in Plato's *Meno* (80d) that in principle, one should never be able to arrive at knowledge of what one does not know beforehand. Aristotle suggests, culminating in the last chapter (100b14-15), that knowers

10. As distinct from Blumenthal (1971b) 62 n. 1, who thinks that Plotinus made Plato's doctrine of *anamnêsis* unnecessary. On the contrary, he explains it, cf. Söhngen (1936) 109, 113.

all potentially know everything, but not yet actually as does Intellect (*nous*). Apart from Aristotle's additional emphasis on the role of sense perception compared to Plato, Plotinus considered the distinction between potential and actual knowledge already advanced by Plato in the *Meno* (81c-d), the *Phaedo* (72e-77a) and in the simile of the sun and the analogy of the divided line of the *Republic*.[11] According to the simile of the sun for instance, the eye, the symbol of the soul (cf. *Sophist* 254a-b), is made in the likeness of the sun (cf. *Timaeus* 45b), the symbol of the Good, without either actually having become the same (508a-b) as light, the symbol of Intellect (*nous*, 508c).[12] Because of the soul's likeness to the maker of intelligibles, however, it can potentially know them all. Plotinus states this interpretation with a clear emphasis on the process of coming to actuality most succinctly in I.6.9.29-32:

> For one must come to the sight with a seeing power made akin and like to what is seen. No eye ever saw the sun without becoming sun-like […].

He also says (VI.2.20.10-23):

> Thus we can certainly say that universal Intellect exists in one way – that is the one before those which are actually (*energeiai*) the particular intellects – and particular intellects in another, those which are partial and fulfilled from all things; but the Intellect over all of them directs the particular intellects, but is their potentiality and contains them in its universality; and they on the other hand in their partial selves (*en hautois en merei*) contain the universal Intellect, as a particular body of knowledge contains knowledge. And the great Intellect exists by itself, and so do the particular intellects which are in themselves (*en hautois*), and again that the partial intellects are comprehended in the whole and the whole in the partial; the particular ones are on their own and in another, and that great Intellect is on its own and in those particulars; and all are potentially in that Intellect which is on its own, which is actually all things at once, but potentially each particular separately, and the particular intellects are actually what they are, but potentially the whole.

11. As distinct from, e.g., Lloyd (1987), who apart from two references pp. 164-65 mainly considers the Aristotelian rather than the Platonic evidence for Plotinus' doctrine. Instead, that evidence is partly provided by, e.g., Schwyzer (1944) 88, 91, 93-94, Emilsson (1995) 38 n. 43 and Hadot (1996) 374.
12. Cf. Jäger (1967) 53.

So for Plotinus, both Plato and Aristotle used the distinction between the particular human soul's potential and actual participation in Intellect. Using this pair of analytic concepts, the designations of which Aristotle turned into philosophical terminology, Plotinus further elaborates the distinction between potentiality and actuality within Intellect. He relies, however, mainly on a certain interpretation of Plato, according to which Intellect on its own has two main subsequent stages and consequently two very different senses of its actualisation.

I.B.2.a. Actualisation of Intellect

First, the sense of actualisation is evident in Plotinus from his conception of how Intellect sprang out of the One as indefinite and first became definite in its reversion to the One (V.2.1.9-13). This conception is mainly (e.g., V.3.12.39-44, IV.3.17.12-21) an elaboration of Plato's similes of the sun (506e-507b) and the cave (517b) in the *Republic* that show the correspondence between Being and Intellect (*nous*).[13] Plotinus also tells us that what corresponds to Intellect, the sight of the eye, is created, as it were, by an infusion (*hôsper epirrûtton*, 508b) from the light of the sun (cf. V.5.7.11), i.e. from the Good, and the sight, Intellect, is directed by this power towards its source. Plotinus interpreted the different degrees of faculties of cognition presented in the analogy of the divided line as having arisen from that sight (511b-e). The first degree among them is intellection (*noêsis*) and discursive reasoning (*dianoia*).[14] Only next in priority does Plotinus simultaneously make use, in Platonic fashion, of the Aristotelian theories of sensation and contemplation, as in Aristotle's *On the Soul* (417b5-28, 425b26-426a11, 429b29-430a19), supplemented by his *Physics* (247b4-7), it is said that just like the potentiality of sense (417b19, 424a17-24, 425b26-426a26, 431b23-432a1), the potentiality of thought will become actualised through its object. In this case the object will just be the One.[15] According to Plotinus (e.g., V.1.6.25, cf. *Parmenides* 139a, 162d-e), this object is absolutely unmoved.

Aristotle explores how everything moves by desiring the Unmoved Mover in the *Metaphysics* (1072a23-1072b8) and how the best life consists in contemplation of the Unmoved Mover in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1178b20-32).

13. Cf. Schwyzer (1944) 91.
14. Cf., e.g., Phillips (1990).
15. Cf. Lloyd (1987) 167-69.

In treatise III.8 (e.g., III.8.7.15-18), Plotinus generalises Aristotle's account for everything and synthesises it with a suggestion from Plato's *Parmenides* (132b-c) that everything thinks.[16] Contemplation of this kind has some role to play in unification with the One, as we shall further investigate below.

I.B.2.b. Actualisation of Forms

According to Plotinus, however, the Forms are still not actually distinguishable from one another prior to the self-intellection of Intellect.[17] Aristotle does talk of the Unmoved Mover as thought thinking itself, but Plotinus rejects that Aristotelian line of reasoning as involving an infinite regress (II.9.1.1-15). Instead, his conception of the self-intellection of Intellect, when the whole is actualising the whole all at once (V.3.5, cf. a similar process in I.2.7.8-10), is inspired by Intellect's discernment and distinction of the Living Being in Plato's *Republic* (596b-d) and *Timaeus* (30c, 39e) – quoted by Plotinus in III.9.1 (cf. VI.7.8.1-18, VI.7.9.22-38, VI.7.18.34, II.9.6.16-19) – and by Plato's *Charmides* (175b-c) and its definition of intellectual moderation, which was already a reply to the paradox presented in the *Meno* (80d-e): to know what one knows and in a sense to know what one does not know as well. Intellect coming to full actuality in its own self-intellection as sketched here cannot of course have occurred in time, as Plotinus informs us in a quite tortuous formulation (II.5.1.7-10). To participate in this kind of actualisation, however, is what unification with Intellect is all about for the human soul.

I.B.2.c. A failing criterion

When it comes to the distinction of particular souls from each other, would any distinction based on the relation between potentiality and actuality of the particular soul's participation in either the continual generation or continual

16. Alluded to by Lloyd (1964) 193.
17. As distinct from the slightly eristic interpretation of Sorabji (2001) 111, I think that the whole answer as to whether intelligibles are prior or posterior to Intellect in Plotinus is found by observing "the exact stages by which Intellect and Forms are created". For instance, whereas the One remains an intelligible for Intellect, the distinction in V.9.8.11-12 between the genus Being (*to on*) and the species of beings (*ta onta*) reveals two very different stages of the genesis of Intellect. The latter is due to Intellect's self-intellection. Cf. note 39 below.

self-intellection of Intellect work after all? And could this be Plotinus' solution to the problem of distinction of souls within Intellect?

He seems to suggest this solution, apparently saying that Intellect is common while the unfolding of thoughts in sequence from Intellect is particular to the particular soul (I.1.8.1-8, IV.9.5.12-26). However, the criterion yields no guarantee as to whether two or more souls might not think exactly the same thing simultaneously, as, for instance, pupils in a classroom might think a mathematical truth like 2 + 2 = 4 at the same time, as two minds with but one single thought. According to Plato's analogy of the divided line, this example refers to discursive intellect, but it is nevertheless quite an appropriate example to illustrate Plotinus' philosophy. For the soul *as* soul cannot do anything more than reason discursively (V.3.6.8-22). As soul, even the best soul is only in the process of becoming akin to Intellect (cf. *Phaedo* 79d-e); it can never become one with Intellect (III.8.8.6-10) and its complete non-discursive thought (cf. I.8.2.9-15, VI.4.16.25-26, V.9.8.19-22). Instead, pure Intellect will appear within the particular soul (V.9.2.20-22, V.3.3.18-V.3.4.4, V.3.14.13-16, V.8.11.33-V.8.12.2, VI.9.5.5-12). So although Plotinus clearly recognises the fact that some particular intellects are less actualised than others with regard to their corresponding embodied selves (e.g., IV.8.3.6-13), in principle at least, more than one person could come to the very same point of which Plotinus speaks (IV.4.5.8-11, cf. VI.2.20.23-24):

> For one must see the things in that world by a kind of awakening of the same power, so that one can awaken (*egeirai*) it in the higher world also; as if one went up (*anagôn*) to some high viewpoint and raising one's eyes saw what no one saw who had not come up (*anabebêkotôn*) with oneself.

So the suggested criterion for distinction does not seem to work.[18]

A defence of the criterion would then perhaps focus on the potentiality side of the relation between potentiality and actuality as being distinct enough (VI.4.16.28-36), cf. Aristotle *Metaphysics* (1023b32-34). Unfortunately, the criterion again delivers no guarantee as to whether the intellectual potentialities of different persons are not exactly the same (IV.9.5.12-26, cf. VI.4.16.24-28). In fact, as we have already seen (II.5.2.20-22), the ultimate intellectual potentiality is the same for all men, namely Intellect in full (VI.2.20.24-25, cf.

18. As distinct from Kalligas (1997) 223: "[…] what distinguishes each part from the rest and from the whole is the partiality of its actualization […]."

V.9.5.1-4). The relationship between what is actualised of intellectual capacities and what is not would then be quite an accidental criterion of particularity. It would identify persons incidentally, who, according to Plotinus, presumably are distinct.

A further difficulty of the suggested criterion is that only the actualised intellectual capacities really could be relevant for a distinction within Intellect, which is itself all actual (II.5.1.7-8, II.5.3.34-36). For only actualised intellectual capacities are part of Intellect. Plotinus points out the connected difficulty of what later became known as 'Averroism', i.e. the conception of one single, universal Intellect excluding any real, particular intellects (VI.5.7.1-11, cf. VI.2.20.10-29):

> For we and what is ours go back to Being and ascend to that and to the first, which comes from it, and we think the intelligibles; we do not have images or imprints of them. But if we do not, we are the intelligibles. If then we have a part in true knowledge, we are those; we do not apprehend them as distinct within ourselves, but we are within them. For, since the others, and not only ourselves, are those, we are all those. So then, being together with all things, we are those: so then, we are all and one (*panta ara esmen hen*). So therefore when we look outside that on which we depend we do not know that we are one, like faces which are many on the outside but have one head inside.

At this point, Plotinus appears to confirm Aristotle's conception from *On the Soul* (430a2-5 & 19-20, 431a1-2, 431b17-23) that actual thought is simply identical with its objects. We shall come back to Plotinus' important qualifications to his endorsement of this Aristotelian formulation of what he in fact believed to be a Platonic doctrine. It would, however, be useless as a criterion for distinction of human souls from each other, for there will be no certain distinction between those actualities acquired by the soul. Though potential, particular intellects might differ (VI.9.5.12-18, cf. Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1023b32-34), in Intellect they will all make one single actuality (V.9.5.11-16 & 26-28, V.3.5.31-33 & 42-43, VI.2.20.16-29). We must look for a sharper criterion.[19]

19. As distinct from Carone (1997) 181: "This theory [deduced from the *Metaphysics* 1023b32-34] provides a way of explaining how, at that level, we are actually identical with the whole though potentially each an individual intellect."

I.B.3. Forms of particulars within Intellect

In an early treatise, V.7[18].1.1-3, Plotinus returns to his experience of ascent to Intellect reported in IV.8[6].1 in order to explain it philosophically:

> Is there a Form (*idea*) of each particular (*tou kathekaston*)? Yes, if I and each one of us have a way of ascent (*anagôgên*) to the Intelligible (*to noêton*), the origin (*archê*) of each of us is there.

Obviously, Plotinus considers an original particular Form in Intellect as a precondition for any ascent to Intellect (cf. *archê*, "origin" or "principle" in IV.3.12.3).[20] It is likewise the precondition of immortality for the self of each particular man (*athanatos hekastos hêmôn*, IV.7.1.1-4), cf. the *Phaedo* (79d-80b).[21] In the opening question and indeed in V.7.2.15-23 he also considers whether there is a Form of each particular thing, as the Stoics seem to suggest with their doctrine of the *idiôs poion* (Seneca *Moral Letters* CXIII.16, *SVF* II.395).[22] However, Plotinus denies such general monadology (cf. V.9.12). He denies that the particular white colour in the different places it appears is different in more than number (VI.4[22].1.23-26). On its own, this does not exclude monadology, for the particular white could be dependent upon a specific Form of the underlying so-called substance, which would make up the particular difference between the white in the tree and the white in the swan, for instance.

20. Cf. Ferrari (1997) 52, 61, Ferrari (1998) 634-35.
21. Ahrensdorf (1995) 185-87 rightly thinks that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is interconnected with the doctrine of separate Forms in the *Phaedo* (100b). He writes p. 187: "It would seem, then, that the philosopher could only attain the wisdom he seeks if his truest self, his soul, is itself a divine and immortal being and if it receives the divine reward or gift of wisdom after death." For some not perfectly clear reason, Ahrensdorf thinks that the separateness of Forms and the immortality of the soul are both altogether improbable assumptions and that Plato would think the same. Ahrensdorf does not consider that a reason why Socrates exhorts his friends further to investigate the nature of the Forms (107b) could be that it leads to yet another proof of the immortality of the soul not spelled out in the *Phaedo*, but unfolded, e.g., in the *Phaedrus* (245c-e), the *Timaeus* (37a-b, 46d-e, 77b-c, 89a) and the *Laws* (894d-895c, 896a-b, 896e-897b). Cf. also section 'I.C.5. Unity or plurality first?' below.
22. Armstrong's 1984 translation of the first line "Is there an idea of each particular thing?" is partly misleading. Cf. the discussion of the consistency of Plotinus' doctrine in Heinemann (1921a) 63-73, Capone-Braga (1928), Rist (1963a), Blumenthal (1966), Mamo (1969), Rist (1970), Blumenthal (1971a) chapter 9, Igal (1973) 92-98, Armstrong (1977a), Deck & Armstrong (1978) and Petit (1999).

This Form would amount to what Leibniz called a monad. Historically, however, Plotinus does not seem to have been admitting something like monads for anything other than persons (cf. IV.3.8.24-30).[23] For not only does he deny that particular, concrete qualities have specific Forms of their own; he also denies specific Forms of particular fires, for instance (VI.5.8.39-46).

Background to Plotinus' view of Forms of persons is found in Aristotle's remarks in the *Metaphysics* (1031a15-28, 1043b2-4) against Plato's theory of Forms, arguing from the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles that if every man were the essence of man, everyone would be the same man (cf. VI.8.14.1-9). Instead of following Aristotle's duality between "real" particulars and "abstract" essences, Plotinus took the inverse Platonic consequence by positing not only a universal Form of man, but subordinate, particular Forms for particular men as well and overtook the possibility of the particular man coinciding with the lowest species of man, a possibility which Aristotle had dismissed (1059b24-26). In contrast, then, Plotinus supports the theory of *infimae species* (VI.2.22.11-19, V.3.9.32-35, VI.7.14.11-18, VI.7.16.4-5).[24]

For Plotinus, according to the opening lines of V.7, the denial of general monadology is simply due to the fact that not everything has a way of ascent to Intellect.[25] Even when everything aside from the One contemplates, as Plotinus says in III.8, only human souls can actually make an ascent and themselves become aware as parts of Intellect (I.3.1.1-18), simply because they have intellects and so must be parts of Intellect.[26] From the corresponding viewpoint of Being, they must then have Forms (cf. I.8.1.9-10, III.7.5.7-12, III.7.7.1-5, III.7.13.66-69). In fact, these two go together and coalesce, for corresponding to what he takes to be Plato's indirectly stated doctrine in the first half of the *Parmenides* (132b-c), Plotinus says that "each Form is a particular intellect" (V.9.8.4). Something particular, which has a particular Form, does not only participate indirectly in Intellect, but actively contemplates directly; i.e. it possesses a particular intellect. In material nature, human persons are the chief examples of beings with contemplating intellects, but as such they

23. Cf. Rist (1963a) 224 and Armstrong (1977a) 56.
24. As distinct from Vacherot (1851) 260, 272 and Capone-Braga (1928) 197, while at the same time, a bit paradoxically in the first instance, cf. Capone-Braga (1928) 200, Ferrari (1997) 60 and partly in answer to the question of O'Meara (1999a) 265: "However it is unclear how the question of Forms of *individuals* can be traced back to the *Parmenides* or the *Metaphysics*." I will trace a probable source in the *Parmenides* below, in this part and the next, 'II. Freedom'.
25. Sporadically indicated by Kalligas (1997) 212.
26. Cf. Gerson (1994a) 75, 78.

are presumably among other living beings in the chain of reincarnation (cf. VI.7.6.21-VI.7.7.5, IV.7.14, III.2.8.9-11).

In the introduction of V.7, Plotinus presents the Form only as a logical precondition for ascent. The ascent itself is not presented as a logical necessity. Instead, a peculiar or logical differentia (*idikê diaphora*, V.7.1.21, *diaphora logikê*, V.7.3.8-9) between persons is a logical necessity in so far as the persons already are in Intellect. This Principle of the Non-Identity of Discernibles (i.e. according to Latin etymology: distinguishables not just subjectively, but logically and objectively) used numerous times by Plotinus (e.g., I.3.4.12-13, II.9.13.22-25, III.2.12.4-7, III.3.3.18-24, III.8.8.30-32, IV.3.5.1-8, IV.6.2.3-6, IV.8.3.22-23, IV.8.4.12-13, V.1.4.37-43, V.1.6.51-53, V.3.2.16-20, V.3.10.49-50, V.4.2.8-16, V.7.1.18-21,[27] V.7.3.5-12, V.9.6.3, VI.2.8.32-33, VI.3.5.23-29, VI.3.17.18-35, VI.4.14.3-5, VI.7.10.7-11, VI.7.39.6-9, VI.7.41.12-14, VI.9.10.18), is just the inverse of the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles (i.e. again, according to Latin etymology: indistinguishables not just subjectively, but logically and objectively), correspondingly used numerous times by Plotinus (e.g., III.8.9.51-53, IV.5.7.20-21, V.1.9.26-27, V.3.15.31, V.4.1.15-16, V.7.3.6-13, VI.1.19.1-8, VI.2.9.32, VI.2.10.40-42, VI.7.34.13-14, VI.9.8.29-33, VI.9.10.14-18, VI.9.11.8-9).[28] For Plotinus, there is a clear analogy between distinctions among intellects and corresponding distinctions among souls. Soul is like a species of Intellect. Considered as a genus it is split into other species, i.e. into particular souls (VI.2.22.23-29, cf. *Timaeus* 30b-c):

> And a particular intellect is a part (*meros*), although it contains all things, and the whole Intellect […] but Soul is a part of a part, but like an activity (*energeia*) proceeding from it. For when Intellect is active in itself, the products of its activity are the other intellects, but when it acts outside itself, the product is Soul. And since Soul acts as genus or specific Forms (*eidous*), the other souls act as specific Forms.

27. Guthrie (1918) asserts "Indiscernibles, Leibnitz' principle of" in Plotinus V.7.1, but here it is rather the inverse Principle of the Non-Identity of Discernibles that is in operation. The same inversion appears in Heinze (1872) 121 n. 1, 309 n. 3 and Capone-Braga (1928) 197-98 n. 2.
28. Reflected in, e.g., Leibniz (1714) § 9, cf. Ousager (2003) for a sharpened and more exhaustive presentation of the role of both principles in Plotinus together with chapter 'II. A. Sufficient Reason behind causes' below. As distinct from Blumenthal (1971b) 55-56, 59-60, it has to be said that since the Principle of the Non-Identity of Discernibles is a simple logical necessity, Plotinus has no need to define the differences between a plurality of souls further in order to affirm that they really are different from each other.

The logical difference of intellects within Intellect and separated from that Intellect (V.3.2.16-20) necessitates a distinctive Form of the particular, prior to spatial embodiment (V.7.1.18-23, cf. VI.4.4.37-39, VI.4.14.16-22).[29] The distinction between "identical" twins, for example (cf. IV.7.5.42-43), is not due to their occupying different parts of space. That is only a logical consequence of the necessity of their having different particular Forms (V.7.2.20-V.7.3.7, VI.7.16.4-5), even if we ourselves are unable to discern their exact difference of Form (V.7.3.1-13, cf. IV.6.3.66-67). For instance, though most bodies really appear to be different (IV.4.34.16-17), we are perhaps not able to distinguish the different characters of breath of so-called identical twins (cf. IV.7.4.8-15), because there will hardly be any.[30] In his denial of the body as 'individuating' and not perfectly 'particularising' either,[31] Plotinus draws a radical consequence of what Plato says in the *Laws* (959a-b):

29. As distinct from Blumenthal (1971b) 56, 59, 63, who does not really consider the possible genus-species relationship between Soul as such and particular souls. A partial reason is that he did not accept that Plotinus believed in Forms of particular souls, cf. Blumenthal (1966). O'Meara (1999a) 268 suggests that the Form of the particular in Plotinus explains the distinctions between sensible particulars, since there are logical and formal differences between particulars, either prior to or co-instantaneous with any embodiment in the sensible world. The problem is that this theory consequently would force Plotinus to assert Forms not only of particular men or intellects but of all particulars; i.e. it would lead to a general monadology. That possibility is, however, excluded, since O'Meara ibid. refers to matter as apparently differentiating particular fires in VI.5.8.39-46.
30. In his criticism of astrology, Plotinus denies direct causation from stars but grants that there might be similar origins of things in this universe and therefore parallel causation within them just as between virtual twins (III.1.5-6, IV.4.34.25-26, III.3.6.22-38, III.3.7.25-28, cf. *VP* 15.21-24).
31. According to what Strawson (1959) 9 labelled "revisionary metaphysics" and in contrast to his "descriptive metaphysics", announced in the subtitle of his book, I do not think ordinary language is always sufficient to express all scientific and philosophic truths. "Individual", for instance, is used in far too broad a sense in common English and corresponding modern European languages to represent things that, by a closer analysis, are definitely not indivisible, as all parts and particulars in practice can be further divided, perhaps in principle even to infinity [Cf. Graeser (1996) 189-90, although he still emphasises an Aristotelian opposition between individuality and universality which is not valid for Plotinus]. An Aristotelian, non-Platonic and therefore also non-Plotinian prejudice predominant for centuries lies behind this widespread misuse (even in Thomas Aquinas), according to which the particular is always ontologically prior – evident in the title of Strawson (1959), *Individuals* (cf. notes 149, 151, 171 and 189 below). References to Francis Bacon and Ludwig Wittgenstein should not be necessary in order to acknowledge the importance of adequate terminology. A reference to the *Phaedo* (115e) suffices. In this study, I restrict the use of the word "individual" to things or persons that Plotinus considers strictly indivisible.

> We should, of course, trust whatever the legislator tells us, but especially his doctrine that the soul has an absolute superiority over the body, and that while I am alive I have nothing to thank for my particularity (*to parechomenon hêmôn hekaston tout' einai*) except my soul, whereas my body is just the likeness of myself that I carry round with me. This means we are quite right when we say a corpse "looks like" the deceased. The real self of each one of us (*ton de onta hemôn hekaston ontôs*) – our immortal soul, as it is called – departs, as the ancestral law declares, to the gods below to give an account of itself.

In this passage from Plato, the soul is held to be the cause of the particularity of the person. How then does the Plotinian Form of the particular relate to the particular soul? Plotinus implies that the kinship of soul to the Forms spoken of in Plato's *Phaedo* (79d-e) must be considered in the sense that the Form is the origin of the Soul. He then confirms (e.g., I.8.1.9-10) what Aristotle says in *On the Soul* (412a19-21), that it is a kind of form (*eidos*),[32] but it is the very inverse of a mere form of a body that Aristotle apparently suggests it to be (413a3-10).

According to Plotinus, souls are in Intellect along with their particular intellects before descending at some stage (V.1.5.1-2, VI.2.4.28-29, VI.2.22.7-10). Before Soul itself became Soul of the sense world, it was the Form of Soul itself (*autopsûchê*) in Intellect (V.9.14.20-22). Likewise, Plotinus says (III.6.18.24-26):

> Now the Soul, which holds the Forms of real beings, and is itself, too, a Form (*eidos ousa*), holds them all gathered together, and each particular Form (*tou eidous hekastou*) is gathered together in itself […].

He says that the mentioned "particular Form will be present in the part" (*en merei de hekaston*, III.6.18.44). This is probably meant as concerning all particular Forms and not just the Form *of* a particular, for which he (as appears in V.7.1.1, IV.6.3.66-67, V.8.5.24-25 and V.9.8.1-3) would rather employ the word *idea* instead of the word *eidos*, employed here.

However, he certainly affirms that the Soul is a Form in its origin (cf. I.1.2.6-7, 1.1.4.18). The particular soul must be assumed to have been established analogously by the particular Form, for "the particular soul has the same Form (*homoeides*) as the whole Soul" (IV.3.2.1-2 & 34-35 & 44). And

32. Cf. Kalligas (1997) 208.

just as the Forms of particular souls must conform to the Principle of the Non-Identity of Discernibles, particular souls must all be different, though they belong to the same order, Soul (VI.7.6.30-31).

We can perhaps get a glimpse of Plotinus' understanding of the relationship of the Form of the particular person to all the Forms of Intellect, when in the same context he compares the relation of the particular soul to the whole Soul with the way a theorem is a part of science. Each theorem potentially contains the whole science (IV.3.2.23-24 & 49-58, III.9.2.1-4, IV.9.5.7-26).

He comments on this by saying that it means the World Soul itself must be a particular soul distinguished from that whole Soul. Implied in his argument is the conception that the whole of science is universal by necessity (cf. IV.7.10.40-42), while the world is already something particular in comparison with all universal reality.

The comparison with collections of propositions in science is only a comparison, for science or knowledge connecting propositions with each other is essentially non-propositional (V.8.4.47-50). It becomes fairly difficult to distinguish between universal knowledge or science (*epistêmê*) and that universal reality, which, according to Plato's analogy of the divided line (511c), science is all about, when the real objects of science, the Forms, also called by their genus Being (*to einai*, *to on*) or Substance (*ousia*) – cf. *Sophist* (245d), *Republic* (509b), *Parmenides* (142b) – are really thoughts as Plotinus posits. Subject and object are then nearly indistinguishable, as is expressed by Plotinus' frequent use of Parmenides' fragment 3 (DK 28B3) "for Thinking and Being are the same".[33] So this Soul in fact contemplates the Being of Intellect quite closely in a necessary and universal way. Considering Plotinus' often used Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles, this upper Soul would then be indistinguishable from an aspect of Intellect itself (III.4.3.22) and therefore probably identical with the very self-intellection of Intellect (cf. V.3.8.35-43). Since Soul is analogous to the Forms, originally being a Form itself, the comparison would then not only be valid for the relationship of the particular soul to the whole Soul, but also for the Form of the particular in its relationship to all the Forms of Intellect. Plotinus confirms this relationship (IV.8.3.6-25).

Every Form is potentially all the other Forms, either by presupposing them or implying them (cf. VI.2.20.16-23 quoted above). Intellect would not be complete without one of them, just as science would not be complete without one of its theorems (cf. VI.4.16.25-28). That the particular soul that

33. Cf. the preliminary study of Ousager (1996) 119-29.

has sprung out of the Form of the particular comes to itself, i.e. has the opportunity to ascend and re-unite with its Form, does not preclude the Form of the particular from being an integral part of Intellect all the same.[34]

I wrote above that in Plotinus, recollection of Intellect means reunification with Intellect.[35] As a consequence, the Form of the particular is always within Intellect as a thinking thought. When the particular soul of which it is the Form unifies with Intellect, it just participates consciously in that thinking. It happens consciously because the Form of the particular in Intellect has now become the self of the particular (VI.7.30.35-39), whereas before, the conscious self was at the stage of discursive intellect or perhaps even below that at a lower level of soul (IV.7.1.24-25).

Concerning the lowest part of this level, Plotinus (IV.9.3.19-29) acknowledges that sense perception is particular to any perceiving, particular body, but it would not really belong to body, as a body completely lacks the faculty of judging truth. For only perception that judges with intelligence (*krinousa meta nou*) really belongs to the particular (*hekastou*). Could this particular self, however, remain particular when soul ascends to universal Intellect?

In fact, Plotinus states that unification with Intellect does not mean that the self will ever be absorbed in Intellect. On the contrary, Intellect becomes a part of the real self (VI.7.35.40-41), when particular intellects as partial selves receive universal Intellect (VI.2.20.15). Then, Intellect becomes a part of the particular human soul rather than the particular human soul becoming a part of Intellect (I.1.8.1-8, I.1.13.5-8, III.4.3.21-24).[36]

If, however, everyone were to contemplate Intellect exactly the same way as would, for instance, Socrates or Plato, how would they differ from each other? Where does the formal difference come from? One option is to take a look at what has hardly been touched on by scholars of Plotinus' Neoplatonism, namely the pervasive role of intentionality.[37]

34. As distinct from Kalligas (1997) 225 and as distinct from (as appears from note 31 above, also the misleading terminology of) Heinemann (1921a) 301: "Da diese Identität von Denken und Sein eine allgemeine, auf keine Individuum beschränkte ist, so geht das individuelle Selbstbewußtsein im allgemeinen unter."
35. Cf. section 'I.B.2. Potentiality or actuality of Intellect?'
36. Cf. Kalligas (1997) 217.
37. This includes even the preliminary survey done by Caston (1993). In his investigation of the issue in question, Kalligas (1997) 223, for instance, does not give this possibility any chance apart from alluding to it at p. 225. Findlay (1970), on the other hand, is a starting point for the acknowledgment of intentionality within Platonism and Neoplatonism alike.

I.B.4. Intentionality within Intellect

Plotinus distinguishes between various orders of intention, in as much as a posterior order of intention comprises our human discursive intellect, whereas the primary orders of intention comprise the real beings of Intellect and their actualisations as particular thinking intellects through Intellect's self-intellection (V.6.6.21-27):

> If then there is Being, there is also Intellect, and if there is Intellect, there is also Being, and the thinking and the being go together. Thinking therefore is many and one. That, then, which is not like this cannot be thinking. And as we go over things particularly, there is man and thought of man, and thought of horse, and horse, and thought of righteousness, and righteousness. All things then are double, and the one is two, and again the two come together into one.

It should be acknowledged first of all that although there may be full identity within Intellect itself, this identity does not preclude intentionality of the human intellect towards Intellect. This is not only true for human discursive intellect, *dianoia* or *logismos*, but – and this is the crux of the matter – also for human participation in the non-discursive Intellect, *nous* (V.8.4.35-37, V.8.6.7-9).[38] By participation, human intellect does not necessarily become exactly identical with Intellect. The whole of Intellect is homogeneously present, "all alike (*homou panta*)", but this is not necessarily so for particular intellects (cf. VI.2.22.23-24). As in Plato's *Phaedrus* (247d), a particular soul is considered by Plotinus to be able to gaze at Intellect only with its upper part, its intellect (*nôi*). The limitation of the consciousness of a human soul is one aspect that leads to intentionality, but only at the stage of discursive intellect. For instance, in the simile of the sun in the *Republic* (511a), an object for investigation is referred to as not to be seen "with anything other than discursive intellect (*dianoiai*)".

In Plotinus, the gaze within Intellect appears to be a much more important aspect than in Plato. Gaze is pivotal for the hypostases coming after the One,

38. To my knowledge, apart from single uses of the word "intentionality" by Graeser (1972) 113 and the word "intentional" by Blakeley (1992) 62 and, likewise, the words "'intentionale'" and "'Intentionalität'" placed in brackets by Beierwaltes (1990) xxxiii-xxxiv, xlii and Beierwaltes (2001a) 95-96, the only scholar explicitly to recognise intentionality in Plotinus is Rappe (1996) 255 and Rappe (1997) 440-42, 449. However, she limits its range to discursive thought only.

since they need to revert in contemplation of the One directly and indirectly to subsist at all,[39] cf. the generation of Intellect in V.3.11.12-16:

> So this Intellect had an immediate apprehension of the One, but by grasping it became Intellect, perpetually in need[40] [of the One] and having become at once Intellect (*nous*) and Substance (*ousia*) and intellection (*noêsis*) when it thought (*enoêse*); for before this it was not intellection (*noêsis*) since it did not possess the intelligible object (*noêton*), nor Intellect (*nous*) since it had not yet thought (*noêsas*).

The intentionality of the soul is stressed most firmly when Plotinus, in an interpretation of Parmenides' fr. 3, places thinking and being in close connection (V.1.4.16-28):

> The blessedness of Intellect is not something acquired, because all its elements are in eternity; and the true eternity is copied by time, as this runs round the Soul, letting some things go and attending to others. For around Soul things come one after another: now Socrates, now a horse, always some one particular reality; but Intellect is all things. […] But each of them is Intellect and Being, Intellect making Being exist in thinking it, and Being giving Intellect thinking and existence by being thought.

Inspired by the *Phaedrus*, Plotinus uses man, in this case the particular man Socrates, and horse as standard examples of Forms or "living Beings" (cf. VI.7.8.1-17, VI.7.9.22-38, VI.7.18.34, V.6.6.24-26) discerned from within the whole Living Being, or Intellect, as this discernment is referred to in the *Timaeus* (39e).

39. In an unpublished paper dating from May 2000 I had the opportunity to discuss the manuscript of Sorabji (2001) entitled 'Why the Neoplatonists did not have intentional objects of intellection' with the author. My main objection remains the following: according to Plotinus, intentional objects that are supposed to be only there for discursive reasoning [cf. VI.6.12.13-16, "empty talk and names for non-existent things" in VI.8.7.18-29 and Gerson (1999) 69 n. 4, who draws attention to the occurrence of *pseudê noêmata* in III.5.7.49], in their quasi-existence in fact all depend on the non-discursive realm of Intellect, and, consequently, on the intentionality of everything towards the One. The maintenance of the manifold is all-dependent on this intentionality. Cf. notes 17 and 37 above.
40. Both Igal (1973) 90-91 and Armstrong in his 1984 translation think that the word *endiamenos* in both the 1959 *editio minor* and the 1977 *editio minor* must be wrong. They conjecture, I think rightly, that *endeomenos* is more likely, cf., e.g., III.8.11.23-26, VI.8.2.19-21, VI.9.6.19-20.

Plotinus explicitly rejects the notion that there is anything like the same succession of "one thing after another" in Intellect (IV.4.2.22-25, cf. IV.4.1.26-28). By unification, soul has become everything in Intellect. "The self is all things, and both are one" (IV.4.2.22, cf. I.1.8.4-8, I.1.13.5-8, III.4.3.21-24). However, there is also intentionality at the level of Intellect, for even when the human intellect and Intellect are one in this way, they are "also two" (IV.4.2.29). As Plotinus says (V.8.4.15-18):

> Each walks not as if on alien ground, but each one's place is its very self and when it ascends (so to speak) the place it came from runs along with it, and it is not itself one thing and its place another.

The gaze, the perspective in which the particular human intellect reflects the whole Intellect as every other part of Intellect reflects all other parts, just as every theorem reflects all science (I.8.2.15-19, IV.3.2.23-24 & 49-58, V.8.4.21-26 & 47-50, V.9.8.3-7, V.9.9.2-3, IV.9.5.7-26, III.9.2.1-4, VI.2.20.1-23), is decisively intentional. When the person ascends to unite his intellect with Intellect as such, he consciously becomes his own Form (IV.4.2.30-32). Like any other Form, the Form of the particular person mirrors the other Forms in Intellect from its particular perspective (V.8.4.6-11, cf. V.8.9.19-22).[41] Plotinus writes on this (IV.4.2.10-14):

> But if he is himself in such a way as to be everything, when he thinks himself, he thinks everything at once (*panta homou*); so that a man in this state, by his attention (*epibolêi*) on himself, and when he actually sees himself, has everything included in this seeing, and by his intuition of everything has himself included.

"The parts (*en merei*) are included in the knowledge of the whole" (IV.4.8.6-7). So although Intellect on its own is "everything at once", intentionality makes the ascent to Intellect and the unification with Intellect something particular to each particular intellect.[42] After all, it is only a consequence and not the cause of having different particular intellects. We must look even further for the reason for the distinction between them.

41. The view is reflected in Leibniz (1686a) § 9 and Leibniz (1689) 1646, as distinct from Gollwitzer (1900) 28: "Worin aber dann ihre Besonderheit besteht, ob sie etwa wie die Leibnizschen Monaden das Universum nach ihrem besonderen Gesichtspunkt repräsentiert, darüber lässt uns Plotin im Unklaren."
42. Cf. Ferrari (1998) 647.

I.B.5. The gaze of souls

In so far as there is a plurality of persons, they must be differentiated by logical necessity. In due course below, we shall come back to our discussion of why there is a plurality of persons in the first place.[43]

First we must deal with the psychological explanations as to how particular persons further expand or diminish their differences from each other. This analysis will make it clear in what sense unification is possible with Intellect as well as with the One, not only epistemologically or noetically but also ontologically or henologically. The intentionality or gaze of the intellect of the particular person is considered by Plotinus to be of extraordinary importance for the lives and fates of different human beings, cf. *Phaedrus* (248c):

> If any soul becomes a companion to a god and catches sight of any true thing, it will be unharmed until the next circuit; and if it is able to do this every time, it will always be safe. If, on the other hand, it does not see anything true because it could not keep up, and by some accident takes on a burden of forgetfulness and wrongdoing, then it is weighed down, sheds its wings and falls to earth.

In a radical interpretation of this passage, the *Timaeus* (90b-c) and the simile of the sun, Plotinus draws the conclusion that (IV.3.8.15-16) "different souls look at different things and are and become what they look at", for they apparently move themselves in either direction (III.2.4.36-38, III.2.7.19-21). A concrete consequence of the rule that 'everything besides the One contemplates' is that everything besides the One must participate in Being and Unity. This appears clearly from IV.4.2.3-10 (the continuation of which was quoted above), where contemplation is defined as widening the perspective and is recommended not to be confused with concentration upon one's embodied particularities:

> Besides, one should certainly remember that even here below when one contemplates (*theôrei*), especially when the contemplation is clear, one does not turn (*epistrephei*) to oneself in the act of intelligence, but one possesses oneself; one's actualisation (*energeia*), however, is directed towards the object of

43. Cf. chapter 'II.C. Determinism disrupted'.

> contemplation, and one becomes this, offering oneself to it as a kind of matter, being formed according to what one sees, and being oneself then only potentially. Is a man then actually himself in any way when he is thinking nothing at all? Yes, if he is [merely] himself he is empty of everything, when he is thinking nothing at all.

Contemplation, therefore, is decisive for the soul's access to everything in Intellect. In this ascent, as mentioned in the simile of the sun in the *Republic* (508a-d) and in the *Sophist* (254a-b), the soul is symbolised simply as a single eye. Plotinus (IV.3.18.19-22, cf. II.3.7.8-10) gives a psychological twist to the doctrine inspired by the Platonic *First Alcibiades* (132d-133b):

> For here below, too, we can know many things by the look in people's eyes when they are silent; but there all their body is clear and pure and each is like an eye, and nothing is hidden or feigned, but before one speaks to another that other has seen and understood.

The story comes to mind here of how Plotinus, according to Porphyry (*VP* 11.1-8), spotted a thief amongst the servants in the household just by having a close look at them all (cf. I.6.8.25-27).

Again, the analogy drawn by Aristotle between sense perception and cognition, to demonstrate that the potentiality of thought, just like the potentiality of sense, will become actualised through its object, merely affirms this Platonic conception from the point of view of the object. What is important according to Plotinus is not only the object of vision, however, but rather first of all the soul's choice of the direction of its gaze. Plotinus connects this choice (IV.3.8.9-10, III.2.4.36-45, III.2.7.15-21) with the as yet undescended souls' choice (*hairesis*) of lives in the *Republic* (617d-620e). So the choice is very much an ethical one with far-reaching consequences for the soul's fate in the law-determined cycle of reincarnation. Since the unification with Intellect sketched out in the *Phaedrus* (247d-248a) is really re-unification, our selves are the intellects there rather than the derived, corresponding embodied souls (VI.4.14.16-22, cf. IV.3.14.4-5, III.2.17.18-19 & 27-28):

> But we – who are we? Are we that which draws near and comes to be in time? No, even before this coming to be came to be we were there, men who were different, and some of us even gods, pure souls and intellect united with the whole of reality; we were parts of the intelligible, not marked off or cut off but belonging to the whole; and we are not cut off even now.

Plotinus thinks there is an invariable measure of the number of souls that stay in Intellect and that are sent to either physical heaven or earth (IV.3.12.8-30, IV.3.24.23-28). Often (*pollakis*) all souls stay undivided, undescended that is, in Intellect (V.8.10.20-22). It looks a bit like the Stoic doctrine of eternal recurrence of separate yet identical world-periods of time, but Plotinus in fact just interprets the myth of the *Phaedo* (107e), the myth of the *Phaedrus* (247d, 248c-249b), the myth of Er in the *Republic* (617d) and the *Timaeus* (39d), which, together with Heraclitus (DK 22B30, 90, 66), were probably a common source for the Stoics as well. For Plotinus writes that after a world-period – compared to a year with its seasons (IV.3.13.8-22) – the souls could all descend to endure embodiment again (IV.3.12.8-35, IV.4.9.1-13, V.7.1.13-26, V.7.2.18-23, VI.4.16.1-3, IV.8.1.36-40, cf. III.2.13.2-3). This means that the number of souls (in possible contrast to forming principles) must be a limited number (V.7.1.17-18, V.7.3.14-23, IV.3.8.20-22), cf. *Republic* (611a) and *Timaeus* (41d). The same quite particular Form could easily produce Pythagoras at one time and Socrates at another time (cf. V.7.1). They would simply be different life stages of the same particular soul or, rather, of the same particular Form of a particular soul, cf. *Timaeus* (42b-d). For every soul possesses all forming principles (*logous*, V.7.1.7-10 & 18-21), and, as Plotinus says (V.7.2.5-6, cf. V.7.3.22-23):

> the parent has them all, but different ones are ready for use at different times.

Every soul, so to speak, employs these principles from its own particular angle of gaze or intentionality. This easily changes from one stage of life to another, but is determined by the same particular Form all the way.[44]

Particular human fortunes seem similarly determined by a law of quantitative measures. The problem of personal freedom arises out of the search for a criterion for distinction between human souls, for can this law be compatible with personal freedom? The answer to that question will simultaneously explain what fundamentally distinguishes persons from each other.

44. As distinct from the opposite Aristotelian interpretation of Sorabji (1999) 24-25 and Sorabji (2000) 297, who reads the reference to aporetic arguments in V.7 as if they were Plotinus' conclusions, so that two different "individuals" with apparently distinct lives as, e.g., Pythagoras and Socrates (V.7.1.3-7), could not be rendered possible by the same Form, although the latter succeeds the former.

I.B.6. *In-esse* and determinism

Plotinus repeatedly asserts the personal freedom of each particular human soul (e.g., III.1.4.20-28, III.1.5.15-24 & 28-33, III.1.7.6-8, III.1.8.4-8, III.2.9.1-4, III.2.10.8-19, III.4.5.1-9, IV.3.15.10-15, VI.8.7.16-22).[45] In line with this, he thinks that it is not necessary to become born again in the sensible world – in this world-period (IV.4.5.28-31, cf. *Phaedo* 114c). If we presuppose that a law must be prior to the particular instances it covers (cf. IV.3.13.24-32), however, such announcements of personal freedom must be conceived of as relative to the law of quantitative measures. Particular persons can then only attain a relative advantage compared to other particular persons, and only in this way gain confidence that they will not be born again. Since there is a ratio, however, it seems it must be filled no matter how petty their virtues may be. Equal absurdities would occur on the other side of the spectrum, for even if all have united with Intellect or even with the One to some extent, a quota would have to be imposed.

The only way out of these absurdities appears to be if Plotinus makes the law cover all virtues and vices exercised by persons, so that there would not be two different orders but only one (cf. III.2.7.29-43). Such a law code (*nomothesia*, IV.3.15.15) or single ordinance (*thesmos*, IV.3.15.15) is described in IV.3.15.15-23 (cf. V.9.5.28-29):

> This law code is woven from all the rational principles (*logôn*) and causes (*aitiôn*) here below, and the movement of souls and the laws (*nomôn*) which come from that Intellect (*ekeithen*); it is in harmony with these last, and takes its principles (*archas*) from there and weaves together what comes after with the intelligible principles, keeping undisturbed (*asaleuta*) all things which can maintain themselves in accordance with the state (*hexin*) of the intelligibles, and making the others circulate according to their natures, so that the responsibility (*tên aitian*) lies with the souls which have come down for coming down in such a way that some are put in this place and others find themselves in that.

This law amounts to determinism. The whole life of any soul becomes much easier to explain if we simply infer determinism on behalf of Plotinus

45. Cf. Saint-Hilaire (1845) 82, Henry (1931) 73, 210, 213.

(III.1.2.17-38, cf. II.3.13.1-9, II.3.16.4-5 & 15-17, *Phaedrus* 246b-c). As he suggests above in the quotation with a reference to the *Republic* (617e) and the *Timaeus* (42e), it would be a kind of 'soft' determinism or compatibilism, according to which freedom in some sense is compatible with determined necessity.[46] Opposed to the view of the Epicureans (cf. fr. 530 in, e.g., Porphyry's *Letter to Marcella* XXVII) and perhaps the Christians as well (*First Letter to Timotheus* 1.9), Plotinus says that the universal Law and Order is simply the reason for transgressions, not the other way around (III.2.4.23-33). He explicitly asserts that those who live consciously according to the described law of descents and ascents possess themselves doing their own work (*erga*, IV.3.15.13, cf. IV.4.44.1-4, III.1.5.15-24).[47] As he also says (IV.8.5.1-4) regarding human freedom, referring to the *Timaeus* (41c-d, 42d-e) and the two stages of the simile of the cave in the *Republic* (514a-521c) and the judgement referred to in the *Gorgias* (523e), the *Phaedo* (107d-e, 113d) and the *Republic* (614a-621d: 614c):

> There is then no contradiction between the sowing to birth and the descent for the perfection of the All, and the judgement and the cave, and necessity and free will – since necessity contains the free will (*epeiper echei to hekousion hê anangkê*) – […].

And later, we are warned again that (IV.3.16.13-15):

> […] one must not think that some things are contained in the Order (*sûntetachthai*), while others are let loose for the operation of absolute freedom (*to autexousion*).

Plotinus follows Plato's suggestion from the *Gorgias* (504d, 506d-e) that "the Order (*taxis*)" or "law (*nomos*)" encompasses the particular human soul and that the peculiarity of each soul is something good. Similarly, in the *Laws* (904b-c) it is said that the acts of will (*boulêsesin*) of each particular human soul are the reasons (*aitias*) for its direction of change, but that all these changes would still happen according to "the Law and Order (*taxin kai nomon*) of Fate". So the compatibilism of Plotinus is modeled on passages that suggest

46. Cf. Whittaker (1928) 76.
47. As distinct from Leroux (1996) 298-99, who thinks that descent is determined in a far stronger way than is ascent. Cf. sections 'I.C.1. Envisioning the One' and 'II.C.1. The causal nexus of ultimate unification' below.

compatibilism in Plato. About the particular soul, Plotinus writes analogously with the hypostasis of Soul (III.6.3.22-35, my emphases):

> In fact, when we say that the soul moves itself in lusts or reasonings or opinions, we are not saying that it does this because it is being shaken about by them, but that *the movements originate from itself*. For when we say that its life is movement, we do not mean that it is movement of something different, but the actuality of each part is its natural life, which does not go outside it. The sufficient (*hikanon*) conclusion is: if we agree that actualities and lives and impulses are not alterations, and that memories are not stamps imprinted on the soul or mental pictures like impressions on wax, we must agree that everywhere, in all affections and movements, as they are called, *the soul remains the same* in substrate and essence, and that virtue and vice do not come into being like black and white or hot and cold in the body, but in the way which has been described, in both directions and in all respects, what happens in the soul is the opposite of what happens in the body.

The soul is not only said to be unaffected by bodily movements, but it is also said to stay the same, as is pointed out regarding its virtues and vices, of which at least the virtues are all considered to have their origin in Intellect (I.2.1.13-15, I.2.6.16). All the movements of the particular soul, past, present or future (cf. VI.7.1.48-49), including what Plotinus would call free choice, are then included in the Form of the particular (cf. V.8.10.18-20),[48] including, for instance, what the particular person is like even before this becomes apparent to the particular person himself (III.3.6.21-22, cf. *VP* 11.8-11).

Settling itself in its particular body for the period of one lifetime, the particular soul brings about the final compound of the total living being (I.1.7.1-6, cf. VI.7.1.13-19). All movements of the particular soul, which according to Plotinus make up its life, arise while it remains the same "in substrate and Substance" (III.6.3.32). Similarly, in a passage a little further on (III.6.5.1-2), we read that though in principle the soul must be unaffected (*apathê*) from

48. Cf. Leibniz (1689) 1646, i.e. "The complete or perfect concept of a singular substance involves all its predicates; past, present and future as well (*Notio completa seu perfecta substantiae singularis involvit omnia ejus praedicata praeterita preaesentia ac futura*)." It is famously reflected in Leibniz (1686b) 53: within the concept of his particular substance is not only that he will travel from Paris to Germany but that he will travel by free choice. Implied is what could be called "personal providence", cf. Helms (1915) 136. As distinct from Husain (1992) 117, who thinks that any actualisation of the Form of the particular soul is excluded by such monadology.

the start, the meaning of philosophy is to make the soul consciously unaffected, or, as Plotinus says (IV.4.44.36-37, cf. I.1.2.9-15): "The sage would not be drawn in any direction." His doctrine retains some support from the *Charmides* (156e-157a):

> "Because", he [the Thracian king and god Zalmoxis, who can make men immortal] said, "the soul is the source both of bodily health and bodily disease for the whole man, and these flow from (*epirrein*) the soul in the same way that the eyes are affected by the head. […]"

Indeed, Plato writes about gaining psychological health right after this, and on a superficial level at least he acknowledges movements of the soul, as, for instance, the movement towards psychological health in the *Phaedo* (95d, 118a).[49] So does Plotinus, but in contrast to Plato, Plotinus explicitly thinks there is a Form of the particular soul, which does not change, is always in good health or, rather, well-being (V.9.11.20, II.1.5.20-21, V.8.11.27-33, 1.5.7.20-21) and contains and assigns those developments invariably (*ametablêton kai autê*, IV.4.2.20-25). Concerning particular souls, Plotinus consequently says (VI.2.5.24-26):

> The soul is a particular being but not in the way that a man is white, but only and simply like some substance; and this is the same as saying that it does not have what it has from outside its substance.

This is the Principle of *In-Esse* Predication that Plotinus validates for all Forms and not only for the Forms of particular persons (VI.7.3.9-25).[50] Remarkably, the principle is distinct from monadism, as more things can participate and, so, 'be in' a single Form at the same time, whereas this would be impossible for a Leibnizian monad. He considers the Principle of *In-Esse* Predication a

49. As distinct from Hackforth (1955) 190 n. 2 referring to von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1919) 57: "[…] daß wir uns auf keine mystische Ausdeutung einlassen: das Leben ist keine Krankheit, und Asklepios heilt kein Übel der Seele."
50. The view is reflected in, e.g., Leibniz (1686a) § 8. My interpretation is distinct from that of Gerson (1994a) 49: "But since Leibniz's doctrine is about individuals, he does not believe there is a difference between accidental and essential predication. […] Plotinus, on the other hand, is not arguing for a necessary connection among all predicates and their subjects, based on an account of individuality." Cf. note 31 above and notes 149, 151, 171 and 189 below.

consequence of Platonism and the Principle of Vertical Causation,[51] which he has derived from the Principle of the Non-Identity of Cause and Effect, saying, "no cause is identical with its own effect", appearing in Plato's *Philebus* (27a) and the Platonic *Greater Hippias* (297a, 297c). The assumption needed to bring forth Plotinus' consequence of the Principle of Vertical Causation is only that the cause be greater, or of greater worth, than its effect, as, for instance, the Form being the cause of its own instantiations.[52]

If everything in the sensible world really is the effect of one or more Forms, sensible things do not cause anything in other sensible things *as* sensible things. Strictly speaking, there will be no 'horizontal' causation within the sensible world such as the apparent interaction of two sensible things on each other (e.g., III.6.8.16-18, III.6.9.24-26 & 39-44, VI.1.20.5-7, IV.4.39.10-11).[53] Thus the apparent interplay of opposites fighting each other is the expression of the relation of Forms (III.6.19.1-3, cf. *Phaedo* 103b-d, III.6.18.29-31, IV.4.29.35-40). Everything in the sensible world has its cause in Intellect or beyond, even when Soul and particular souls happen to transmit it. Plotinus literally makes causes and effects in the sensible world into relations of Forms to each other or rather into a pre-established harmony between Forms having different properties within (cf. V.8.6.1-9, I.1.9.22-23, III.2.14.15-16, II.9.12.18-23, II.9.17.6-9). Even the relatively independent, privative and formless principle of Matter (II.4.14.14-16, II.5.4.11-12) is indirectly produced from Form (V.8.7.18-25) or is the lowest Form (e.g., VI.2.22.11-32) and so, paradoxically, its damaging effects will also be either indirectly or directly determined by Form (I.8.8.1-28, II.9.12.30-44, VI.5.11.35-38).[54]

With this Principle of *In-Esse* Predication, Plotinus deliberately takes up what Aristotle is opposing in his attempt at a *reductio ad absurdum* in the *Metaphysics* (1065a6-11):

> Clearly there can be no causes and principles of the accidental such as there are of that which is in its own right; otherwise everything would be of necessity.
>
> For if A is when B is, and B is when C is, and C is not fortuitously but of necessity, then that of which C was the cause will also be of necessity, and so on down to the last mentioned of the things caused (but this was assumed to be accidental) […].

51. The metaphorical designation of Wagner (1982).
52. Cf. Sedley (1998) 131.
53. Cf. Wagner (1982) 57.
54. Cf. note 151 below.

Plotinus actually thinks everything apparently accidental or coincidental is caused by necessity,[55] i.e. that it is actually predetermined. For instance, in IV.8.5.14-16 he adheres to the determinism rejected by Aristotle:

> For final results are referred to the origin from which they spring, even if there are many intervening stages.

This same consistent determinism is presented in V.5.12.37-40:

> But the Good is older, not in time but in truth, and has the prior power: for it has all power; that which comes after it has not all power, but as much as can come after it and derive from it. The Good then is master also of this derived power.

Plotinus assigns necessity differently according to how it is derived from the One, whether as a sensible particular only, or as a relatively independent, active Intellect or even as something more in the way it appears in man, as we will further investigate. In the end, however, everything is determined by the One, for "when you tell the cause (*aitiologôn*), you tell all" (VI.7.3.13-14, cf. III.1.2.17-38).

We can observe that this deterministic logicism is at stake in Plotinus when he strongly opposes Aristotle's conception in the *Categories* (3a21-25) of differentiae outside substances. Differentiae must be properties or Qualities of a Substance that differentiate it from other Substances, cf. *Theaetetus* (208c-209a). If these differentiae were not in the Substances themselves, the Substances would, after all, not be different, according to Plotinus' implicit but often used Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles (VI.3.5.14-29). It exhibits his adherence to the Principle of *In-Esse* Predication. That Substances are considered by Plotinus to be more than their differentiae merely enforces the principle. According to the *Theaetetus* (209a), the essential differences between men, for instance, cannot be discerned merely judging from their appearance by using one's discursive reason (*têi dianoiai*). For Plotinus, this is primarily because such particular essential differences will lie at a stage beyond discursive reason, namely within Intellect. Discursive reasoning is just able to state that, logically, there must be essential differences.

55. Cf. Weismann (1997) 1166.

Plotinus says that not only for some things but for all things (VI.5.2.24-28) "everything is included in the 'what it is'" or the essence that Aristotle refers to in the *Metaphysics* (1078b23-34), and that Plotinus equates with the Platonic Form. Just as in every other Form, the determination of the things that will participate in the Form are laid down in any Form of a single particular (VI.7.2.12-19):

> What then prevents each and every thing being its reason why, in the case of the others too, and this being its Substance? Rather, this is necessary; and when we try in this way to grasp the essential nature of a thing, it comes out right. For what a particular thing (*hekaston*) is is the reason why it is. But I do not mean that the Form is cause (*aition*) of existence for each thing – though this is of course true – but that, if also you open each particular Form (*to eidos hekaston*) itself back upon itself, you will find the 'reason why (*to 'dia ti'*)' in it.

This principle is explicitly applied to the Form of man (VI.7.2.6-8, cf. VI.8.14.1-29) and to the human soul (VI.2.5.22-26):

> Is then Being (*to einai*) one thing, and the rest something else, which contributes to the completion of the Substance of the soul, and is there Being [as such] and an essential differentia (*diaphora*) makes the soul? No, the soul is a particular being (*ti on*) but not in the way that a man is white, but only and simply like a particular Substance (*tis ousia*); and this is the same as saying that it does not have what it has from outside its Substance.

Although it seems to be an accidental property (cf. Aristotle *Categories* 1b29, 2a31-34, 4a18-21 & 29-34), the whiteness of a man can be difficult to ignore, since it might be derived from a substantial actualisation (*energeia*) of whitening or becoming pale (II.6.3.1-6). This is the reason why Plotinus, in another context, takes the whiteness of the swan to express substantial predication (VI.1.20.18-20), i.e. predication according to the Form of the swan. Both the swan that is white and the swan that is not acquire their colours as a result of their Substances. This is simply the Principle of *In-Esse* Predication. The whole point is that what seems an accidental predication is in fact substantial predication, or as Plotinus puts it (II.6.3.10-14):

> […] it is immediately clear that the reality there [in Intellect], when it possesses a peculiarity of Substance (*idiotêta ousias*), is not qualitative, but when the process of rational thinking (*ho logos*) separates the distinctive peculiar-

> ity (*idion*) in these realities, not taking it away from the intelligible world but rather grasping it and producing something else, it produces the qualitative (*poion*), as it were (*hoion*) a part of Substance, grasping what appears on the surface of the reality.

Only what appears separate from Form and is "always accidental (*sûmbebêkos aei*)" could be called purely a Quality or a sensible quality (*poiotês*, II.6.3.28-29).

However, Plotinus also says (II.6.1.40-41) that "the rational formative principles (*logous*) which made the qualities are altogether substantial (*ousiôdeis holous*)" because (II.6.2.15) "the Form is not quality (*poiotês*) but rational formative principle (*logos*)". According to Plotinus' view of the Order (*taxis*) of both the intelligible and the sensible world, nothing is ever really accidental and separated from the Substances or Forms (e.g., IV.3.12.17-19, IV.3.16.13-15, II.3.8.4-5, cf. *Gorgias* 504d, 506d-e, *Timaeus* 30a, *Philebus* 26b, 66b). The same conclusion appears from the treatment in VI.2.14.[56] The predication will only be called accidental provisionally because the law behind it has not been found yet. For the law could be more complex than just saying all swans are white – for instance, if one is actually black.

Plotinus says (V.1.4.42-43) that "the peculiarity (*idiotês*) makes the quality (*to poion*)". He has actually combined his interpretation of what Aristotle says in the *Categories* about predication and, at one point, about the particular cause and form of everything in particular in the *Metaphysics* (1071a27-29, 1071a36-b1) with the Stoic notion of "the peculiar quality (*to idiôs poion*)" into his Principle of *In-Esse* Predication. The strict Platonic Principle of the Non-Identity of Discernibles together with the Plotinian Principle of Vertical Causation and the one-third Aristotelian, one-third Stoic and one-third Plotinian Principle of *In-Esse* Predication were later fashioned into the monadology of Leibniz.[57] A stage of that development is certainly distinguishable

56. As distinct from Hancock (1985) 300-301, who on the basis of VI.2.14 thinks that there are no Qualities in Intellect and that there is an absolute distinction in Plotinus of substantial and accidental Qualities or qualities. It must be said in response to this that although Plotinus denies Quality a place among the primary five genera, he does not need to deny Quality a place in Intellect.
57. Frede (1978) 33 observes the potentially general theory of particular forms of particular things in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, whereas Trouillard (1949) 354 alludes to the Principle of *In-Esse* Predication in Leibniz as originating in Plotinus. The reference made p. 1645 by Leibniz (1689) [an essay formerly ascribed an earlier date, ca. 1680-84, and known under a title given from the initial words: *First Truths* (Primae veritates)], however, is to

in Plotinus. In opposition to the Stoics and the exoteric Leibniz at least, his subject for predication is not the sensible particular, but instead the Form. This is clear from II.6.3.1-6:

> The whiteness, therefore, in you must be assumed not to be a quality but an actuality (*energeian*), obviously proceeding from the power of whitening; and in the intelligible world all Qualities, as we call them, must be assumed to be actualities (*energeias*), taking their quality (*poion*) from the way we think about them, because each and every one of them is a peculiarity (*idiotêta*), that is, they mark off the Substances in relation to each other and have their own peculiar character (*idion charaktêra*) in relation to themselves.

Therefore, in Plotinus there will be no infinite regress of monads, such as Peter Frederick Strawson, taking up the Aristotelian thread, reproached Leibniz' monadology for creating.[58] Plotinus, for instance, explicitly denies the imagination of an infinite number of equal and mutually completely independent souls operating in a single human body or in the world (IV.2[4].2.9-12). Rather than the sensible particulars making up an infinity of Forms, "the Order", i.e. sufficient patterns of Forms or laws, makes up the variety of the sensible world according to Plotinus. His Principle of *In-Esse* is necessary to distinguish human souls from each other and must therefore determine them decisively. It remains another issue whether it is sufficient to distinguish them at a higher level of unification than on the level of unification with Soul and Intellect. For such higher unification seems to be a necessity for the human soul.

→ Thomas Aquinas *The Sum of Theology*, part one, question fifty, reply to the fourth article. In this passage, the particular angels' essences are declared to be *infimae species*. Leibniz suggests a generalisation of Aquinas' principle for everything else as well. The fact that Leibniz was influenced by Plotinus was suppressed deliberately by Leibniz himself because he feared accusations of the heresy of Spinozism, which in Bayle's weighty dictionary had been connected with Plotinus and Neoplatonism. This suppression has been investigated well yet still not exhaustively by Rodier (1902), Merlan (1963) 57-59, 61-62, Meyer (1971) – in this connection especially pp. 46-48 – and Mercer (2001) 174-80, 188-89, 203-04, 213, 223, 316 n. 37. Cf. Ousager (1995a) 60-76.

58. Strawson (1959) 132.

I.B.7. Is Intellect unified?

Difficulties surrounding the unification with Intellect are not necessarily due to the particular soul that tries to unify itself with Intellect. The cause lies also in the fact that unification of Intellect involves a difficulty on its own. In comparison with the soul and its discursive reasoning only, Intellect certainly has unified subject and object (III.8.8.6-10, V.3.3.21-45). Intellect is however not completely one on its own (IV.3.1.12-13), for if it were, it would – according to the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles – coalesce with the One itself (V.4.2.8-11, cf. VI.9.2.43-45, III.8.9.51-53). Since Plotinus stresses that Being and Intellect presuppose each other (V.1.4.26-33), he seems (e.g., V.9.5.11-16 & 26-28 & 30-31, V.9.8.8-18, V.3.5.31-33 & 42-43, VI.5.7.1-11, V.4.2.45-46) to confirm the view of Aristotle that actual thought is identical with its objects.[59] Actual thought appears in what Aristotle in *On the Soul* calls the active or even creative (*poiêtikon*, 430a12) Intellect in contrast to the passive (*pathêtikos*, 430a24) or potential Intellect.

This sounds quite in accordance with Plotinus, for whom that passive or potential Intellect would correspond to the Platonic discursive intellect (*dianoia, logismos*). He finds, however, that Aristotle's formulations on the active Intellect confirm only one aspect of Plato's theory of divine Intellect,[60] namely the aspect to be extracted from the *Sophist* (248e-249b), the *Timaeus* (31a, 39e) and the *Parmenides* (132b-c) that particular Forms are thoughts and that everything is thinking (V.9.8.1-7, III.8.8.17-18).

Aristotle does not manage to present the whole story of the soul's ascent to Intellect, for it is evident that not all of Intellect becomes equally accessible at once by ascent. Though it is there "all at once (*homou panta*)" with a partly Parmenidean (*homou pan* DK 28B8.5, *homoion* 8.22, *homon* 8.47, *homôs* 8.49) and partly Anaxagorean formulation (DK 59B1) transferred by Plato to Intellect in the *Phaedo* (72c, cf. 97b-c) and repeated by Plotinus fairly often (e.g.,

59. Whereas Plotinus' doctrine is only taken as a qualified confirmation of Aristotle by Seidl (1985) 259-60, who points out that, unlike Plotinus, Aristotle regards the identity between subject and object as merely epistemic, the identity is taken at face value as confirmation of Aristotle by Carone (1997) 181. However, Seidl does not mention sources other than Aristotle for Plotinus' doctrine. Cf. (next) note 60 below.
60. Cf. Szlezák (1979) 143 (n. 454), 163-66 & *passim* on the essential Platonic background to the Plotinian doctrine of Intellect and his refutation of, among others, e.g., Merlan (1963) 13, 47 & *passim*, who is an adversary for an entirely Aristotelian account. Cf. (previous) note 59 above.

I.1.8.8, III.6.6.23, III.6.18.25, III.8.9.53, IV.2[4].2.44, IV.4.11.27, V.3.15.20-21, V.3.17.10, V.8.10.18, V.8.11.5, V.9.6.3 & 8-9, V.9.7.11-12, V.9.10.10, VI.4.14.4-6, VI.5.5.3-4, VI.5.6.3, VI.6.7.4, VI.7.2.38 and VI.7.33.8-10),[61] the emphasis is on intentional outlook to the particular intellect.[62]

Plotinus does not refer to Aristotle explicitly for the doctrine that subject and object are identical in Intellect, and he does not confirm the doctrine.[63] Instead, he goes even beyond Plato's authority (V.8.4.51-54, cf. *Phaedrus* 247d-e) by frequently referring to Parmenides (fr. 3) for the point that in Intellect "Thinking and Being are the same" (V.1.4.26-28, V.1.8.17-18, V.9.5.29-30, III.8.8.8, I.4.10.6, cf. III.5.7.51-54, V.6.6.21-23, VI.7.41.18). The point of the reference is more precisely that despite the unification of the thinking subject and the object thought in the Form, if every Form is a thought, thinking and being remain a duality after all (V.4.2.8-11, III.9.7.4-6). This appears from Plotinus' more detailed treatment of Parmenides' fr. 3 in VI.7.41.12-14: that which thinks (*nous*), thinking (*noêsis*) and what is thought (*noêton*) are not identical, for if they were, they could not be distinguished.[64] It is not only a logical difference, for in contrast to Aristotle (cf. *Metaphysics* 1003b22-34, 1059b27-31), in Plotinus there could be no logical distinction without a real difference as well – and correspondingly, no real difference without a logical distinction (VI.2.10.40-42).

Plotinus explains the generation of Intellect (VI.7.40.13-18) by saying that what is thought and what thinks are not different except in definition (*all' ê logôi*) but are a plurality and not a simple Unity – like the One. This explanation refers to Intellect, numerically the same though created by a thought (VI.7.40.6-13), itself thinking – and furthermore thinking itself – as distinguished aspects of the same single Intellect (cf. III.9.1.10-15). If Intellect

61. Cf. Ousager (1996) 116-17.
62. Cf. Kalligas (1997) 225.
63. As distinct from Szlezák (1979) 165.
64. Kahn (1969) 723 is right in remarking that the identity of intelligibles with Intellect in Aristotle is kindred to the historical Parmenides' teaching on some identity between Thinking and Being. Plotinus was aware of that when he pointed to the older tradition for this view in Plato and Parmenides before Aristotle, cf. Ousager (1995b-96). On the other hand, I think it is highly questionable whether Kahn (1969) 724 is right in saying: "This identification is firmly established in Neoplatonism, where the Platonic Forms themselves lose their independent status and are ultimately indistinguishable from nous, the noetic principle which guarantees their unity." Nor does the conclusion drawn by Kahn that, in this respect, Neoplatonism involves a "divergence from Plato's own view" seem to be proven.

really were completely one, the different aspects or thoughts would not have constituted a plurality, as Plotinus explicitly claims they do. As distinguished in a plurality, they cannot be the One (VI.7.41.13-14).[65]

This means that Plotinus does not agree after all with Aristotle's position in *On the Soul* (417b5-7) that when the knowledge of the soul is actualised, this actualised knowledge becomes its true self. The bottom line according to Plotinus is that real unification of the self cannot come along with Intellect. We have to look further, for just as Soul must look to Intellect to become and stay Soul, Intellect must look to the One to become and stay Intellect (V.1.6.40-48). The One cannot become known by thought (e.g., VI.7.40.1-2), and so the One could not become the true self on any Aristotelian account. The basic reason for the particular human soul's ascent to the One, however, is that its true self will be found in that ascent.

For the human soul, it is impossible to ascend to the One other than through Soul and Intellect (e.g., V.9.2.23-27, VI.8.7.1-3, VI.9.3.18-25, VI.7.36.3-10, I.7.2.1-2, I.3.1.12-18, IV.4.4.1-3, cf. *Philebus* 22c-e, 60b, 64c).[66] The self, however, even when it is unified with either Soul or Intellect, will never really be unified by unifications with either Soul or Intellect. That is, for instance, the sense of Plotinus' qualification of what he says about the soul being immortal when it "in a way has become one (*hoion hen genomenê*)" with Intellect (V.1.5.3), for it is already immortal as part of Intellect (V.1.4.10-12). Instead, the self has to unite with the One to truly become Self. For though Intellect will appear as a self to everything that is derived from it (V.5.2.13-18), it is not the Self to itself or to what is prior to it. All Forms of Intellect, including Forms of particular persons, find their Self in the One (VI.7.37.18-22).

65. As distinct from Carone (1997) 181, 184 and Sorabji (2000) 296.
66. As distinct from Corrigan & O'Cleirigh (1987) 594: "[…] tyranny of intellect and will cannot be a precondition of ascent."

Chapter I.C

Unification with the One

I.C.1. Envisioning the One

Plotinus refers (e.g., I.2.1.3-4 & 21-26, I.2.3.5-6 & 20-21, I.2.7.23-30, I.4.16.12, IV.7.10.32-40, I.6.6.20, cf. I.2.2.1-10) to the *Theaetetus* (176b, cf. *Republic* 613a, *Laws* 716c-d) and its recommendation for "becoming like God as far as possible (*homoiôsis theôi kata to dûnaton*)". The question is, in how far does Plotinus consider that possible, when the supreme God according to him is the One? On this issue Porphyry states (*VP* 23.14-18, cf. 22.34):

> To Plotinus "the goal ever near was shown": for his end and goal was to be united to, to approach the God who is over all things. Four times while I was with him he attained that goal, in an unspeakable actuality and not in potentiality only.

Judging from the context, there is no doubt that the God referred to here is the One.

On the other hand, many passages in Plotinus on unification with the One present the unification in terms of vision, as in the vision of the Beautiful or the single Form of the Beautiful in the *Symposium* (211e-212a). They suggest a theistic interpretation, according to which a difference between the particular soul and the One would be fully preserved.

For instance, in chapters V.5.7-8, there is a difficult passage on the appearance of the One, where Plotinus shows his understanding of Plato's simile of the sun in the *Republic* (507d-508b) by referring to how the physical eye has its own power of light (cf. *Timaeus* 45b-e) in contrast to "the alien light (*phôs […] to allotrion*)" stemming from the exterior sun (V.5.7.23). This is a reference

to Parmenides' doctrine (DK 28B14) of the moon probably borrowing light and thereby appearing as an "alien light (*allotrion phôs*)" (cf. V.6.4.15-16). By way of this expression, Plotinus shows however, that the light of the sun itself is borrowed from the 'true sun', the Good (cf. V.6.4.14), for like everything else, the physical sun must have come from the Good according to the simile of the sun (509b). In context, this has bearing on how Plotinus conceives of the light of Intellect as a borrowed light from the Good or the One (V.5.7.16-35). Within Intellect *as* Intellect, there are after all only Forms of light, not light itself (V.5.7.31-35), which will either emanate from or be the One itself (V.5.7.11-21, V.6.4.14-16, VI.4.7.21-47, V.3.17.28-37). Plotinus then describes the appearance of the One (V.5.7.31-V.5.8.18):

> Just so Intellect, veiling itself from other things and drawing itself inward, when it is not looking at anything will see a light, not a distinct light in something different from itself, but suddenly (*exaiphnês*) appearing, alone by itself in independent purity, so that Intellect is at a loss to know whence it has appeared, whether it has come from outside or within, and after it has gone away will say "It was within, and yet it was not within."
>
> But one should not enquire whence it comes, or there is no 'whence': for it does not really come or go away anywhere, but appears or does not appear. So one must not chase after it, but wait quietly till it appears, preparing oneself to contemplate it, as the eye awaits the rising of the sun; and the sun rising over the horizon ("from Ocean", the poets say) gives itself to the eyes to see. But whence will He of whom the sun is an image rise? What is the horizon, which He will mount above, when He appears? He will be above Intellect itself, which contemplates Him. For Intellect will be standing first to its contemplation, looking to nothing but the Beautiful, all turning and giving itself up to Him, and, standing still (*stas*) and filled somehow with strength, it sees first of all itself become more beautiful, all glittering, because He is near. But He did not come as one expected, but came as one who did not come: for He was seen, not as having come, but as being there before all things, and even before Intellect came. It is Intellect, which comes, and again Intellect, which goes away, because it does not know where to stay (*menein*) and where He stays, that is in nothing.

The passage presents a problem for interpretation. For significant interpreters like Arthur Hilary Armstrong, it seems as if Plotinus, like theists in general, acknowledges here a kind of grace and therefore a decisive arbitrariness to

the One, while on the other hand, as we will explore further below,[67] Plotinus assigns the One absolute modal necessity, which is exerted in an activity with identical absolute modal necessity. Reading the above text carefully, then, it becomes clear that the arbitrariness of suddenly appearing there or not (V.5.8.2-3) is not due to the One (V.5.8.13-14).[68] The reference to the same suddenness of the light (*exaphthên phôs*) of understanding (*oida*) as in Plato's *Symposium* (210e) and the Platonic *Seventh Letter* (341c-d), cf., e.g., V.3.17.28-29, VI.7.34.12-13 and VI.7.36.18-19, is used only superficially, as an initial cue.[69] In one sense, it refers to the analogous appearance of Intellect "as if he were a sun (*hoia hêlion*)" in the treatise immediately preceding (V.8.10.8). More precisely, however, it is a reference to the general doctrine of the atemporal suddenness (*to exaiphnês*) of emerging unity explored in corollary IIa of the *Parmenides* (156d).[70] It shows that any 'arbitrariness' could only be due to the viewpoint from the accidental nature of Intellect compared to the absolute necessity of the One, or, as is clearly stated a little further on in the same treatise, V.5.10.7-10:

67. Cf. chapter 'II.A. Sufficient reason behind causes' and section 'II.C.5. The absolute Self'.
68. As mentioned by Meijer (1992b) 61, the One is unmoved.
69. In contrast to the interpretation of Dodds (1960) 7, who denies grace in Plotinus altogether, an interpretation later reaffirmed by Kremer (1981b) 170, the two passages V.5.8 and V.3.17.28-32 are taken by Armstrong (1967a) 261 as evidence for a theistic interpretation of Plotinus' mysticism. It is interesting that Armstrong (1977a) 68 at the same time acknowledges that the One is really no personal God. This circumstance at least superficially confirms some of Bussanich's criticism of the usefulness of the distinction between theistic and monistic mysticism addressed in note 1 above, cf. Blakeley (1992) 61. However, the divergence itself works perhaps as the touchstone indicating that a purely theistic interpretation of the mysticism of Plotinus is not coherent – in contrast to the monistic interpretation.
70. Kenney (1997) 321 believes that a monistic interpretation of unification with the One in Plotinus is inherently temporalistic and involves a tensed discourse, which Plotinus warns us against. If so, the same would be true of the theistic interpretation of unification, which relies on a theistic discourse apparent in a number of places in Plotinus. Kenney appears to confuse causal discourse concerning unifications at the levels of both Intellect and the One with tensed discourse. As Plotinus emphasises (IV.4.1.26-28, V.1.6.19-22, V.5.12.37-38, III.7.6.50-57), the temporal order is only a subset of the causal order operating at the level of Soul.

In Cornford's opinion (1939) 203, it is over-interpretation to connect the suddenness (*to exaiphnês*) beyond time in the *Parmenides* (156d-e) with Platonic recollection (*anamnêsis*). In fact, this is what Plotinus ultimately does, e.g., IV.4.15.10-20 and III.7.12.19-22. Whether it is a correct interpretation of Plato or not, in any case, it is quite ingenious. Cf. the point made by Mamo (1976) 211.

> But when you throw yourself to it, you will concentratedly (*athroôs*) do so, but you will not declare it altogether (*homou pasan*): otherwise, you will be [only] Intellect thinking, and, even if you attain, He will escape you, or rather you will escape Him.

The metaphor of the sun rising from the ocean does not indicate theistic arbitrariness.[71] On the contrary, for Plotinus would not have subscribed to the Humean belief that it is equally probable that tomorrow it would rise or not.[72] Instead, Plato's simile of the sun, like the role of the sun in the philosophy of Parmenides above, suggested to Plotinus that the sun is the most stable physical thing, on which everything on earth physically depends. Even the moon shining in the night is a borrowed light from the sun. Plato's *Cratylus* (409a-b) acknowledges that Anaxagoras was not the originator of the doctrine, so the originator could easily be Parmenides;[73] a circumstance that would certainly appeal to Plotinus (cf., e.g., V.1.8).[74] He will have noticed the tension in Plato between the central role attributed to the sun in the simile in the *Republic* (507d-509d) and the sun's secondary role as moving in an orbit around the unmoving earth in the *Timaeus* (38d). Anticipating the Copernican heliocentric world picture, he seems in this context (conversely in V.8.7.3-4 & 36-38) to have decided in favour of the central role of the sun depicted in Plato's simile (cf. VI.4.10.26-28, VI.4.7.21-47, I.7.1.24-26, IV.4.30.2-4). He makes somewhat kindred remarks about the insignificance of the earth (III.2.8.6-7) and suggests that, as Archimedes said, it would not be completely inconceivable to move it (IV.4.26.8-9).[75] That we only see the sun directly during the day and not at night is due to our subjective viewpoint on earth (cf. *Timaeus* 40b-c).

Correspondingly, if we can only see the One occasionally from the viewpoint of Intellect (cf. *Republic* 517b-c), it is due to the condition of Intellect and not to the condition of the One, which is always there, cf. VI.7.36.15-19:[76]

71. Cf. Bussanich (1988) 141 on the horizon as a metaphor for the limit of Intellect.
72. Hume (1739) 1.3.11.2 admits it would be ridiculous to doubt that the sun will rise tomorrow.
73. As distinct from Gallop (1984) 85.
74. Cf. the preliminary study of Ousager (1995b-96) on further Parmenidean traits in Plotinus.
75. Cf. Pappus *Collection* VIII, xi, p. 1060. I consequently disagree with Clark (1943) 28 n. 15 that geocentric astronomy is univocally affirmed by Plotinus.
76. In contrast, Bussanich (1994) 5304-05 does not resolve the tension he notices between the reports on unification with the One in V.5.8 and VI.7.36 respectively.

> It is there that one lets all study go; up to a point one has been led along and settled (*hidrûtheis*) firmly in beauty and as far as this one thinks that in which one is, but is carried out of it by the surge of the wave of Intellect itself and lifted on high by a kind of swell and sees suddenly (*exaiphnês*), not seeing how […].

Waiting for unification to happen is not enough, and so Plotinus corrects and turns the metaphor around: the One waits, so to speak, for the occasion when man within Intellect will satisfy its measure. Plotinus' comparison with the earth's relation to the sun suggests that law (cf. VI.8.10.35) determines those occasions. It is a law that is immanent but not necessarily self-evident within Intellect (cf. V.9.5.28-29). In another passage (VI.9.7.3-5), he can therefore say that the One is always accessible without contradicting himself.[77] This position only presupposes a viewpoint which is no longer from Intellect and which (VI.8.15.10-28) is not dependent upon chance (*tûchais*), randomness (*eikêi*) or coincidence (*tôi 'sûmbebêken'*). As we shall soon investigate further, this option suggests that the One is within the human soul already.

Returning to Plotinus' autobiographical report of mystical experience in IV.8.1, there is no doubt that he describes at least a unification with Intellect and its life, cf. *Sophist* (248e-249a), which – by way of an Aristotelian designation (*Metaphysics* 1072b28) – is called the "best life".[78] As already noted, the ensuing descent back from or through Intellect is described as well (IV.8.1.8).[79] Arguing against Jean Trouillard, John Rist, however, furthermore considers the unification described here a unification with the One, because the wording

> […] set firm in the divine (*en autôi hidrûtheis*) I have come into that actuality (*eis energeian elthôn ekeinên*), setting myself above everything else intelligible (*hûper pan to allo noêton emauton hidrûsas*) […].

77. As distinct from the theistic interpretation of especially chapters V.5.7-8 by Armstrong (1967a) 261, which has been repeated by Mortley (1975) 372 and by Sorabji (1983) 157-58, and has even been taken for granted by Bussanich (1994) 5304, who is otherwise a strong critic of the theistic interpretation of Plotinus' mysticism. My interpretation here is in line with some of Rist's remarks in (1964a) 96 and Rist (1967) 224-25 rather than with, e.g., the theistic interpretation in Rist (1964b) 215.
78. Though it is not the rule or most probably the case here either, it could possibly also have been a designation for the life of the One, cf., e.g., VI.8.15.18-26 and Bussanich (1987).
79. Cf. chapter 'I.B. Unification with Intellect' above.

resembles Porphyry's words in *VP* 23.11-12 – the continuation of which has already been quoted above – on unification with the One "set above Intellect and all the intelligible (*hûper de noun kai pan to noêton hidrûmenos*)".[80] Pierre Hadot and Dominic O'Meara have nevertheless maintained Trouillard's narrower interpretation, and Rist has consequently retracted his original interpretation.[81] Surely, this circumstance does not on its own determine which interpretation is right.

Porphyry might easily misinterpret Plotinus in other respects as, for instance, the frequency of Plotinus' personal unifications, as Hadot and O'Meara have pointed out.[82] In any case, he misrepresents the high frequency (*pollakis*) of the attainment by Plotinus of "the goal shown by the blessed to be ever near" according to the Apollonian oracle (*VP* 22.34). With respect, however, to whether or not Plotinus has united with the One at all, Porphyry does not seem to be misrepresenting him, for Plotinus employs the same usage of the One or the Good seated on top of Intellect and its contents in V.5.3.5 and VI.7.17.34, and in VI.8.7.7 he says that the Good or the One "sits in the primary seat (*en prôtêi hedrai on*)", cf. VI.5.9.43-45 and IV.8.6.10: "in its homely seat (*en têi oikeiai hedrai*)", cf. on the Good in its house in the *Philebus* (61a-b, 62a-c, 64c) and analogously for every subsequent, subordinate power (V.2.2.1-2). In that seat, the One correspondingly uses Intellect as its "pedestal" (V.5.3.4-6), cf. *Phaedrus* (254b). At the same time, the content of these passages is close to the metaphors at play in the passage quoted above from V.5.8.8 of what the One "will mount above (*hûperschêsei*) when He appears?" with the answer "He will be above Intellect" (V.5.8.9, cf. VI.7.22.17-21).

In VI.9[9], which is an early treatise with only two treatises in between since IV.8[6], Plotinus in his most explicit manner describes unification with the

80. Cf. Rist (1967) 56, 195-96 in concord with the general grouping of Plotinus among metaphysical monists in Rist (1965).
81. Trouillard (1955b) 98, Hadot (1970-71) 288-90, O'Meara (1974) 239 n. 5, 243 n. 21, Hadot (1987) 14-15, Rist (1989) 193 with n. 31, O'Meara (1993a) 104-05, D'Ancona Costa (2002) 523. It is interesting but not convincing when Hadot (1970-71), partly inspired by Merlan (1963) 26-27, employs a far later Muslim adaptation of Plotinus in his argumentation against Porphyry's first-hand interpretation of Plotinus' mysticism.
82. Cf. Hadot (1970-71) 288 and O'Meara (1974) 242, 244 – sustained by an additional argument in O'Meara (1993a) 104-05 – for the point that unification is more habitual than sporadic for Plotinus. The same point is repeated but far more strongly by Bussanich (1988) 188, Bussanich (1994) 5323 and Bussanich (1997) 363-64. The question is whether this unification is with Intellect only and not with the One? Cf. discussion in section 'II.C.1. The causal nexus of ultimate unification' below.

One. The conception of unification with the One was probably not unknown to Plotinus when he wrote IV.8, and so, he may well have just given a hint of that all-important unification when dealing preliminarily with unification at a lower level, such as unification with Intellect.

Hadot has pointed out, and Rist subsequently agreed, that Plotinus in IV.8.1 apparently talks of having set himself "above everything else intelligible (*to allo noêton*)" and then implies that at this stage, he himself would be intelligible and belong to Intellect and not to the One.

However, the sentence can be understood slightly differently, as identifying Otherness (*to allo*) and the intelligible as being other than the One, cf. VI.3.22.1-2, V.3.15.38-39 and hypothesis II of the *Parmenides* (143b, 146b, 146d). In fact, the One itself is occasionally (V.4.2.11-26) referred to as the Intelligible (*to noêton*), so in so far as the One is an ordinary intelligible, the soul is also beyond that according to IV.8.1, probably reaching the furthest point (*to eschaton*) and the peak of the Intelligible (*ep' akrôi genêtai tôi noêtôi*) as the "end of the journey", i.e. quite clearly a synonym to the One appearing in I.3.1.14-18 (cf. VI.9.11.41-45).

The passage in question further supports this inference of soul unifying with the One itself and not just with Intellect, for the unification "into that actuality" (IV.8.1.6) corresponds to another passage where, in a polemic with Aristotle, Plotinus declares the first actuality (*energeian tên prôtên*) to be beyond Substance (*ousia*), saying that this actuality without Substance is in a way the One's existence (*tên hoion hûpostasin*, VI.8.20.10-11, cf. V.6.3.10-11). This is an argument *ad hominem*, for Plotinus usually just acknowledges together with Aristotle that actuality is a consequence of substance, and, since the One is beyond Substance (*ousia*) according to hypothesis I of the *Parmenides* (141e) in conjunction with the role of the Good in the simile of the sun in the *Republic* (509b), the One is said (VI.7.17.10) to be altogether "beyond actuality (*epekeina energeias*)".

Here (VI.8.20.9-19), Plotinus argues instead from another of Aristotle's premises that since actuality is prior to any potentiality, cf. *Metaphysics* (1071b12-20), and any substance without actuality is a defective substance, pure or perfect actuality must be prior to substance. According to Aristotle's own employment of the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles, there can only be one pure actuality (1074a37). Plotinus consequently draws a conclusion by way of his independent henological argument – that the One in contrast to anything else is absolutely modally necessary or self-sufficient[83] – so

83. Cf. chapter 'II.A. Sufficient reason behind causes' below.

that this perfect actuality is in fact to be found in the Platonic One. The most perfect of all must have perfect actuality and cannot be Substance in the sense of Being, since Being according to hypothesis II of Plato's *Parmenides* (142d-e, 144a) always will be complex and therefore a potentiality of a kind and not complete or perfect (contradicting the historical Parmenides DK 28B8.11 and 8.32-33). Here, Plotinus has forced an argument out of Aristotle similar to the way in which the One of hypothesis I is presented by Plato as a precondition for all the other hypotheses of the *Parmenides*. He has in this way turned the relation between actuality and unity around according to what Aristotle states himself in *On the Soul* (412b8-9), namely that:

> Unity has many senses (as many as 'is' has), but the proper one is that of actuality.

For according to Plotinus, actuality is instead a predicate derived from unity, just as perfection is also a predicate parasitic upon and derived from pure Unity, i.e. from the One.

In VI.5.7.17, however, the place where the person remains is only "where the All is set firm (*hou hidrûtai to pan*)", and this does not have to be in the One as yet. In the context, this seat turns out to be within Intellect (cf. VI.5.9.43-45, III.7.4.22, V.5.2.11, I.3.4.9-12). So since it is neither in the One nor riding on top of Intellect, it is another seat, probably in the very centre of Intellect.[84] From the mentioned seat on top of Intellect there will, after all, be a vision of the One similar to Intellect's incipient and continuous contemplation of the One (VI.7.16.10-14). From there, the seer can attain a sight that coalesces with the light from the One. It makes up a union of a kind in which "theistic" duality seems at the same time to be preserved throughout (VI.7.35.33-41, cf. VI.7.35.14-15):

> […] the soul sees by a kind of confusing and annulling the intellect which abides within it – but rather its intellect sees first and the vision comes also to it and the two become one. But the Good is spread out over them and fitted in to the union of both; playing upon them and uniting the two it rests upon them and gives them a blessed perception and vision, lifting them so high that they are not in place nor in anything other, among things where it is natural for

84. As distinct from Bussanich (1994) 5312, who, though he admits that the seating mentioned in I.3.4.10 could be of another kind than the seating mentioned in IV.8.1.6, supposes that Plotinus is speaking about "the same kind of event".

> one thing to be in another; for He is not anywhere either; but the intelligible place is in Him, but He is not in another.

The passage should be qualified, however, with another passage a little later in the same treatise, VI.7.41.1-5:

> For it seems likely that thinking has been given as a help to the natures which are of the more divine kind, but lesser, and as something like an eye for their blindness. But why should the eye, which is itself light, need to see real Being (*to on*)? But what needs to see real Being, seeks light through the eye because it has darkness in itself.

This concerns the soul's relation to the Being of Intellect, but it will presumably be pre-eminently true for the soul's relation to the One. Plotinus subsequently admits that thinking is light of a kind, but thought is not enough to become the Good, i.e. the One (VI.7.41.14-22). It is correct that Plotinus, just like Plato in the *Timaeus* (45b-e) and in the simile of the sun of the *Republic* (508b), thinks that the physical eye literally participates in what Plotinus (IV.5.4.1-2, V.5.7) in a radical fashion, inspired by Aristotle, believes is the physically appearing, but yet immaterial, light of the sun, cf. *On the Soul* (418b13-17). This does not make unification with the light of the sun into unification with the sun, however, nor unification with the indefinite thought stemming from the One into unification with the One.

For the One is essentially something other than its "light". Even if we knew the One as symbolised by a sun, all light without mass (VI.4.7.32-47, V.5.7.13-20, V.6.4.14-16), and we only knew the sun through its light (V.3.17.28-37), we should after all not confuse the sun with its light (II.1.7.19-26, VI.9.4.10-11, VI.9.9.6-7, V.1.6.28-30, V.1.7.1-4, V.5.7.11-21, IV.3.10.2-5), cf. *Republic* (508e-509a). Nor should we confuse the sun with the sight of its light, or the eye – the soul – with its sight, cf. *Republic* (507d-508b), even when Plotinus says that the soul at one stage of unification has itself become almost pure intelligible light (VI.9.9.57-58, cf. V.3.17.33-37).

Other passages create disagreement among interpreters. A cornerstone for what we can call the theistic sight- and mirroring-theory of unification with the One appears in VI.9.11.41-45:

> […] for one becomes, not Substance, but "beyond Substance" by this converse. If then one sees that oneself has become this, one has oneself as a likeness of that, and if one goes on from oneself, as image to original, one has reached "the end of the journey".

Even in this passage, however, two very different stages are to be distinguished. It starts out from a state of absolute union, in which the Self and the One are indistinguishable, both "beyond Substance", cf. *Republic* (509b), at "the end of the journey" of ascent, cf. *Republic* (532e) and the *Laws* (718e-719a) with its reference to Hesiod's *Works and Days* (287-92). In the next line formulated hypothetically, the sight of oneself will already be in a state of descent.[85] Therefore, the state is only a stage of likeness to the One, not identity as before. However, it is from such an after-image of mirroring that the original "end of the journey" can more easily be regained. Previously in the same treatise, absolute unification has been described as attained from the state of vision. Although the suggestion of identity is a "bold suggestion (*tolmêros men ho logos*)", Plotinus at the same time suggests it is right, since he says that any seeing belongs to the past at this stage (VI.9.10.11-21, VI.9.4.7-10, III.6.5.9).[86] As the One and like the One (V.3.10.5-6), the soul does not really see, but (VI.7.39.1-2) it "would only be a simple concentration of attention on itself (*haplê tis epibolê autôi pros auton estai*)",[87] cf. the One having "in a way self-awareness (*hoionei sûnaisthêsei*)" and being *katanoêsis*, probably to be translated "thoroughly thought" (V.4.2.17-18).[88] This will after all be experience enough,[89] for it is described also as "eternal wakefulness and a thought transcending thought (*hûpernoêsis*)" (VI.8.16.32), i.e. the ultimate goal of the awakening into oneself mentioned in Plotinus' autobiographical sketch (IV.8.1.1, cf. IV.4.5.8-9, III.6.5.1-13).[90]

85. As distinct from, e.g., Kenney (1997) 335: "discovery of the true self reveals this self to be but an image of its source." The criticism must be brought forward that in his ostensibly impartial discussion of whether a theistic, monistic or a quasi-monistic interpretation of unification with the One in Plotinus is most appropriate, Kenney (1997) 317, 319, 322-23, 325, 327, 329, 330-31, 334-37 has already decided beforehand in favour of an interpretation within the theistic range by referring to all mystical states in Plotinus to be matters of "contemplation".
86. Cf. Zeller (1919) 669, Bréhier in a note to his 1938 translation of VI.9 p. 169, Beierwaltes (1974) 31 and Meijer (1992a) 307.
87. Cf. Rist (1967) 49-51 and Phillips (1990) on the role of *epibolê*.
88. Cf. Beierwaltes (1985) 135: "Vielleicht ist das Nicht-Denken des Einen gerade als die *höchste* Form von Denken zu begreifen […]."
89. Cf. and at the same time as distinct from O'Daly (1973) 93, who writes that the human self does not vanish in unification with the One, for "otherwise there would be no experience", and as distinct from Meijer (1992a) 318: "I do not believe that Plotinus thought of ascribing to the mystic a share in this possible superconsciousness of the Supreme Entity."
90. A point alluded to by Bussanich (1994) 5312.

There is a vision towards unification, even "another kind of seeing (*allos tropos tou idein*)" which is superior also to Intellect's non-intellectual looking (V.5.8.22-23). In this superior kind of vision, "another kind of looking at the One (*allôs ekeinon blepein*, VI.7.35.30)", the soul has become vision (*opsis*) into itself (*en autôi*, VI.7.35.15) and, consequently, the soul (VI.7.34.20-21):

> […] looks at that instead of itself (*ant' autês*); but it has not even time to see who the soul is (*tis de ousa*) that looks.

The result of the vision is the loss of what has hitherto been oneself (*epidosis hautou*) – becoming a soul no more – while becoming like with (VI.7.35.42-44) and adapting to (*pros epharmogên*) the One (VI.9.11.22-25).[91] Here, there will be no contemplation or vision towards anything else and, so, no ordinary vision at all (cf. III.6.5.9).[92] The same is implied by the dismissal of real seeing during union in favour of co-presence (*sûneinai*) in VI.9.3.10-13, which is presented with greater clarity together with a reference to the actualising of something like "the One within" – which we are going to explore more fully in the following section – to absolute awareness in VI.9.10.9-11 (cf. also *en autêi*, VI.7.34.12):

> When therefore the seer sees (*idôn*) himself, then when he sees (*horai*), he will see himself like this, or rather (*mallon de*) he will be in union with himself as like this (*hautôi toioutôi sûnestai*) and will perceive (*aisthêsetai*) himself as like this since he has become simple (*haploun*).

In a previous passage, VI.9.4.28-30, the two stages are distinguished, again with the act of seeing following descent:

> […] when someone is as he was when he came from Him, he is already able to see as it is the nature of that God to be seen […].

Vision is a necessary help towards unification, but in the final stage, vision is not enough. Moreover, something that the soul's vision has previously caught

91. As distinct from Bussanich (1988) 189.
92. I think Bussanich (1988) 186-87 overlooks the qualifying *hoion* in VI.8.16.19-21 where the One is described as "so to speak (*hoion*) looking to Himself". To my mind, cf. VI.8.13.47-50, it is just another metaphorical expression of the self-sufficiency of the One, in the same way as in V.1.6.18, where the One is described metaphorically as "continuously turned towards itself (*epistraphentos aei ekeinou pros hauto*)."

hold of might become a hindrance to the contemplative or visionary aspects of soul's unification with the One. It will be a hindrance for the soul "being alone in order to receive the Alone" (VI.7.34.5-8, VI.9.4.21-34, IV.3.15.5-7, cf. IV.4.3.6-9, IV.7.10.24-52, IV.3.8.15-16, IV.3.27.14-24). For those who become free by uniting with the One could only unify without "hindrance" (VI.9.7.14-16, VI.8.7.1-6 & 30). At the final stage, vision will be a hindrance to unification (e.g., VI.9.4.7-10).

One should be very careful not to confuse the particular human soul's mystical approach to the One with the cosmic approach of Intellect to the One ever since its genesis as proto-Intellect, as exhibited in, e.g., V.2.1.9-13 or V.3.11.1-16, "wishing to attain it in its simplicity [but] coming out continually apprehending something else made many in itself" (V.3.11.2-4, cf. VI.7.16.10-22, III.8.8.30-32), cf. *Republic* (596b-d).[93] For by necessity, Intellect can only remain an image of the One (V.4.2.23-26). This is not necessarily so for the particular human soul, which is not just Soul, but already has the whole of Soul and the whole of Intellect within. The particular soul is then potentially more than just Intellect. It could potentially be the One as well.[94] The argument that the particular human soul and the One must be absolutely distinct, the particular human soul being inferior to the One, would not account for the fact that the particular human soul has access to Intellect either, even though Intellect and Soul are also considered as being truly distinct.[95]

The stages of unification with the One appearing most explicitly in VI.9[9] are confirmed in more detail in a later treatise, V.8[31]. The treatise is mainly about Intellect and unification with Intellect, but at one stage (V.8.10.39-V.8.11.24), unification with the intermediate god of Intellect is smoothly compared to unification with the supreme god, the One.[96] The very presentation of the place of Intellect in between the One and Soul in the last chapter of

93. As distinct from, e.g., Trouillard (1960) 82, Trouillard (1974) 6 and Hadot (1990-91) 490. They seem to hark back to Burque (1940), who presents the best argument for this approach.
94. As distinct from Blumenthal (1971b) 58, Armstrong (1976) 191 and Rist (1989) 188, who believe that the relationship between Soul and the particular human soul is the relationship between an elder sister and a younger sister, cf. IV.3.6.10-15, II.9.18.16. However, nowhere does Plotinus write that Soul should be "older" than the human soul. In fact, aspects of the particular human soul are prior and so "older" than the Soul.
95. As distinct from Hadot (1990-91) 489-90.
96. Hadot (1980), despite a suggestive heading on oscillations between unity and duality in mystical states, only considers the unifications spoken of in V.8 as unifications with Intellect, cf. Hadot (1987) 11-12.

the treatise, V.8.13, suggests this to be the case. For unification with the One is simply the paradigm case of all unification.

Both Intellect and the One are described as gods within. In both cases we are able to contemplate the god within. By unification with either, however, we can become more than mere spectators (V.8.10.32-V.8.11.24). Absolute unification with the One implies at some stage that vision will no longer be possible, for any vision implies duality (IV.6.1.36-37 & 39-40, V.3.10.12-14, V.5.7.1).

We can only look at the One as an image within, in the initial stages as it were (*hoion*), as a perfected image of oneself rather than an image derived from the One (III.8.11.19-21, V.8.11.1-4 & 13-17), quite analogous to what was required for unification with Intellect (V.8.9.7-14). Love, the urge for unification, depends upon that gift of imagination (VI.7.33.22-26). Those self-made images have to be transcended however, in order for the human soul to come "into unity with itself (*eis hen autôi*)". After unification has been attained, the image will be derived from the god as an after-image and helps further unifications, again transcending the image to identity with the god within (V.8.11.4-21, VI.9.11.44-45). This rule is valid concerning unification with Intellect being "everything at once" (V.8.11.33-V.8.12.7), but presumably pre-eminently with regard to unification with the One. For corresponding to what we have noticed already and will further elaborate upon concerning unification with the One, it is said that one can descend and become two (*eis dûo*) again, i.e. separate oneself from the god. Compared with reports elsewhere, the reports on literal perception in general and vision in particular as being possible only in separation from the god (V.8.11.10-12 & 20-22, V.5.4.1-10) suggest that the god implied in these reports cannot be Intellect (cf. IV.4.2.11-14), but must be the One. Plotinus' point is perhaps established as an interpretation of the *Republic* (524d-e):

> If the One (*to hen*) is sufficiently seen itself by itself (*hikanôs auto kath' hauto horatai*) or is so perceived by any of the other senses, then, […] it wouldn't draw the soul towards Substance (*epi tên ousian*).

According to the *Republic* (525a), vision (*opsis*) does in fact (*mentoi*) discover an unlimited manifold inherent in everything that appears as one. In the interpretation of Plotinus, vision draws the soul towards Substance and Intellect rather than to the One because vision by necessity implies the manifold. The One cannot be "sufficiently seen itself by itself". Solely using its power of vision, the soul would be alienated from the One.

That explains why the initiate will become an object of vision during union instead of a subject of vision, visible to others mainly due to the thoughts that will emanate from him (V.8.11.17-19). He must become identical with Beauty (V.8.11.19-21), and as Plotinus acknowledges (I.6.1.25-26, 1.6.6.21-26, I.6.7.28-30, I.6.9.37-43, V.5.8.10, V.9.2.7-9, VI.7.32.28-32 & 38-39, VI.7.33.19-20 & 37-38, cf. *Republic* 509a, *Symposium* 210e-212a, 218e, *Timaeus* 87c), this is almost synonymous with the Good, which again is almost synonymous with the One.[97] Therefore, since vision is external, during union there can be no vision of the Good as an object. Instead, there could only be the same kind of 'vision' as the object has, i.e. 'vision' as a subject. There will be either a full awareness of oneself or co-presence, fusion or unification (cf. *Cratylus* 412a) with oneself and "as it were" self-perception (*hoion sûnesis kai sûnaisthêsis hautou*), "careful not to depart from oneself (*heautou apostênai*)" (V.8.11.23-24, V.5.4.9-10). This supports the claim – investigated further below – that this other Self of the One, which one has become (VI.9.10.10 & 21, cf. VI.5.1.14-26, V.1.11.9-10, V.8.12.1-3), will basically be a regaining of one's true Self.

In conclusion, the theistic envisioning and mirroring theory of unification with the One is insufficient to account for the absolute unification that Plotinus indicates is possible, however difficult it may be.[98] Among others, René Arnou, Rist, Armstrong, Henry Blumenthal, Gerard O'Daly, and Hadot have held a theistic view of unification in Plotinus.[99] In Rist's case, the view runs counter to his original interpretation of Plotinus' sketch of a mystical autobiography in IV.8.1 as being unification with the One: an interpretation I have defended above, against the interpretations of Trouillard, Hadot, O'Meara and the older Rist that it could only be a unification with Intellect. For since – according to the Principle of the Non-Identity of Discernibles – the ascending soul would in that case be distinct from the One in exactly the same way as is Intellect and be distinct *as* Intellect, consequently Rist in his early work could not

97. As distinct from Hadot (1987) 13.
98. As distinct from the main line of approach in, e.g., O'Daly (1974).
99. Cf. Lindsay (1902) 472, Underhill (1919) 486, 495, Arnou (1921a) 246, 248 (though for a while seriously considering the opposed monistic interpretation at p. 187), Maréchal (1938) 82-84, Trouillard (1961) 436, Rist (1964b) 213-20, Armstrong pp. xxvii-xxviii in the 1966 preface to his translation, Rist (1967) 213-30, 227, Armstrong (1967a) 260-63, Blumenthal (1969) 326, Combès (1969) 318-19, 324, O'Daly (1973) 85, O'Daly (1974) 169, Armstrong (1974) 193, Hadot (1980) 245, Kremer (1981a) 54, Sorabji (1983) 160, Charles-Saget (1985) 96, Seidl (1985) 259-60, 263, Hadot (1987) 17, Rist (1989), Husain (1992) 121, Torchia (1993) 134 and Gerson (1994a) 223, 293 n. 49-50. One exception to Hadot's general theistic view seems to be Hadot (1971-72) 273 with his reliable summary of VI.9 with elements that suggest a monistic interpretation. Hadot (1990-91) 483, 485, 487-90, however, tries to explain those elements from a theistic interpretation.

after all believe in anything other than just unification with Intellect, even if it was a higher, not thinking but only loving Intellect (*nous erôn*, VI.7.35.24, cf. VI.9.3.26-27, V.5.8.22-23).[100]

We must look to another quite neglected theory to account for unification with the One, which at the same time can render the passages dealt with hitherto intelligible. The main recent proponent of this theory, Plato Mamo, has called it the monistic or quasi-monistic theory of unification,[101] but we could also simply call it the identity theory of unification.[102]

I.C.2. The One within

According to Mamo's theory of the ultimate stage of ascent, the self becomes identical with the One. Mamo does not investigate what makes the human soul capable of that ascent. Plotinus in fact explains how this is possible, since (VI.9.3.20-22):

100. Cf. the confusion in Armstrong's 1966 preface to his translation, pp. xxvii-xxviii, whether we obtain ultimate union with the One as Intellect, as Armstrong thinks, or as the One. The notion of a 'non-thinking' loving Intellect is suggested by, e.g., Rist (1964b) 216 and Bussanich (1988) 180. This notion is dismissed by Gerson (1994a) 223, 293 n. 50. Contrary to what Gerson suggests, however, even if he is right in dismissing the notion, Bussanich's argument for a kind of 'monistic' mysticism in Plotinus does not depend upon it.
101. Mamo (1976) 201. Forerunners are Vacherot (1846) 584-85, Daunas (1848) 116, Vacherot (1864) 391, Rodier (1899) 1127B, Caird (1904) 214, Zeller (1919) 669, Heinemann (1921a) 303, Souilhé (1922) 193, Söhngen (1923) 51-52, Inge (1923) 246, Maréchal (1927) 298, Bréhier (1928) 160-62, de Corte (1931) 44, 50, de Corte (1935) 181, 200, Söhngen (1936) 116-17, Bréhier in a note to his 1938 translation of VI.9 p. 169, Trouillard (1949) 355 – with some reservation –, von Ivánka (1956) 33, Jansen (1963) 188, von Ivánka (1964) 76, 82-89, Salmona (1967) 53, Kélessidou-Galanou (1971) 391-92, Beierwaltes (1974) 31. Successors are Miller (1977) 190, Kremer (1981b) 176, Beierwaltes (1985) 146, Beierwaltes (1986) 304, Beierwaltes (1987) 47, Meijer (1992a) 308 – with some qualifications from Meijer (1992b) 66 – and Blakeley (1992), who prefers to call his interpretation "dialectic" monism, while another forceful successor to Mamo, who does not, however, find the term "monistic" appropriate, is Bussanich (1988) 180-93: 192, Bussanich (1994) 5326-28 and Bussanich (1997) 364, cf. Weismann (1997) 1165. Maréchal's interpretation turns theistic in the second French edition of his book, Maréchal (1938) 84, now emphasising what he regards as the soul's distinct vision even within the One. Gerson (1994a) 223, 293 n. 49-50 apparently wants to have it both ways but ends up with a theistic interpretation stressing the insurmountable *relation* of human souls to the One.
102. Bussanich (1988) 192. Cf. note 1 above.

> one is hastening to the Good, and [must] ascend to the origin in oneself (*en heautôi*) and become one from many, when one is going to be a contemplator (*theatên*) of the Origin and the One.

On purely speculative grounds, Plotinus thinks we should realise that unification of the soul with the One is only possible because something within our soul is similar to it in such a way as to become identical with it (VI.9.11.38-45). It is a version of the old principle of sensation and probably cognition generally in Parmenides, Empedocles and Plato (cf. DK 28A46) to know 'like by like' (IV.5.8.19-26, VI.9.4.27, VI.9.8.28-29, VI.9.10.10-11, VI.9.11.32, VI.7.34.10-11, V.8.2.43-46, II.4.10.3, III.8.9.19-23), as possessing an identical property, cf. Plato in the *Timaeus* (37a, 45c) according to Aristotle *On the Soul* (404b16-18),[103] and Democritus according to Aristotle *On Generation and Corruption* (323b10-15). The One within is not made as an after-image by a previous, conscious unification with the One like the one in VI.9.11.43-45 discussed above, for that unification presupposes the One within as more than an imagination only. If epistemology or, rather, gnoseology concerning the One is not to become empty, we must presuppose an ontological or, rather, henological reality within (VI.7.31.8-11).[104] Particular human souls can only fulfil the Delphic commandment (cf. IV.3.1.8-10) of knowing themselves by virtue of this, their non-intellectual 'One within' (VI.7.41.22-32, IV.4.4.11-13, VI.9.8.24-29). Similarly, a quite important aim of treatise V.3[49] is set out as the following (V.3.2.1-2):

> First we must enquire about the soul, whether we should grant it knowledge of itself (*gnôsin heautês*), and what it is in it that knows, and how.

In this treatise, the final point that the absolutely simple One does not allow ordinary knowledge or description (V.3.14.1-4, V.3.17.21-28, cf. *Parmenides* 142a) is approximated dialectically. It does not exclude a sort of non-intellectual knowledge from within the soul (V.3.14.4-13, cf. *Ion* 533d-534e):

103. Cf. Boas (1921) 327 and partly as distinct from Lloyd (1964) 193, who, while acknowledging knowledge in Plotinus as 'like by like' equates 'the god within' the soul merely with Intellect.
104. As distinct from Seidl (1985) 262-63 and Hadot (1990-91) 485, 489-90. The latter explicitly argues against the thesis of 'the One within' as suggested by, e.g., von Ivánka (1964). Cf. Inge (1923) 246: "We can know the unknowable, because in our deepest ground we are the unknowable." Cf. further below.

> But if we do not have the One in knowledge (*têi gnôsêi*), do we not have it at all? But we have it in such a way that we speak about it, but do not speak it. […] But just as those who have a god within them and are in the grip of divine possession may know this much, that they have something greater within them, even if they do not know what, and from the ways in which they are moved and the things they say get a certain awareness of the god who moves them, though these are not the same as the mover; so we seem to be disposed towards the One, divining […].

Likewise, the following treatise could easily concern also the interiority of the Good or the One, when Plotinus in passing states that (III.5[50].3.25-27):

> […] for, though we say, too, that the Best (*ariston*) in us men is "in" us, all the same we give it a separate existence. So It must exist alone (*monon*) there above, where the soul which is unmixed abides.[105]

The One within is separate as a consequence of its absolute modal necessity, as we will further explore below.[106] To sceptics in a context where it has been discussed immediately before whether approachment to the One is possible at all (IV.4.4.1-5), Plotinus states (IV.4.4.10-11, as a commentary to the *First Alcibiades* 133d):

> For it could happen that, even when one is not conscious that one has something, one holds it to oneself more strongly than if one knew (*eideiê*).

Interiority is not evidence of the possibility of identity, for the interiority of the One could be present as an image only (V.8.11.1-4). It is the other way around: the possibility of identity with the One presupposes and demands interiority of the One to the human soul. In a passage that uses some formulations of the self-sufficient nature, which we will investigate further and confirm below can only be synonymous with the One,[107] Plotinus explains the experience of ultimate unification as being due to that 'nature' in ourselves (VI.8.15.14-23):

105. As distinct from Armstrong who, in a note to his 1967 translation, referring to V.3.3, assumes that the highest element in us is the intellectual element. Armstrong asserts the same view in a note to his 1966 translation of I.1.2, referring to VI.4.14. Those passages do not tell the whole story, however. Cf. note 155 below.
106. Cf. chapter 'II.A. Sufficient reason behind causes'.
107. Cf., e.g., section 'II.C.3. Two concepts of necessity'.

> […] if we ever see in ourselves (*en hautois*) a nature (*phûsis*) of this kind which has nothing of the other things which are attached to us by which we have to experience whatever happens by chance – for all the other things which belong to us are enslaved to and exposed to chances, and come to us in a way by chance, but this alone has self-mastery and absolute freedom by the actuality of a light in the Form of Good, and Good, and greater than that which belongs to Intellect, having its transcendence (*to hûper*) of thinking not as something brought in from outside; surely, when we ascend to this and become this alone and let the rest go, what can we say of it except that we are more than free and more than absolutely free?

Through Plotinus' single chapter of VI.5.1, for instance, the God "within every one of us (*en hekastôi hemôn*)" is shown not just to be "the whole" (VI.5.1.1) of Intellect, but rather the Good or the One that is "our own (*oikeion*)" (VI.5.1.20-21), and which, due to its absolute Unity, cannot be a whole, cf. VI.2.12.10-14 and the *Parmenides* (137c-d).

Correspondingly, according to the three adjoining treatises on the soul IV.3-5, there are three different kinds of human souls (e.g., IV.3.7.8-12), corresponding to three different parts of the human soul. For, (III.2.18.3-5):

> one must consider, too, the second and third parts of the soul, and the fact that soul is not always active in the same parts.

The first kind of men, however (IV.3.6.30-34):

> […] might unify themselves (*henointo an*), others nearly reach this point in their striving, and others attain it in a lesser degree, in so far as they act by powers (*dûnamesin*) which are not the same actualities (*energousin*), but some by the first, others by that which comes after it, others by the third, though all of them have all.

He repeats the doctrine in IV.3.8.10-16:

> And if one takes a general view of the nature of soul, the differences in souls have been mentioned in those passages too where there was talk of "seconds" and "thirds", and it was said that all souls are all things, but each [is differentiated] according to that which is actualising in it: that is, by one being united (*henousthai*) in actuality (*energeiai*), one being in a state of knowledge, one

> in a state of desire, and in that different souls look at different things and are and become what they look at.

We have already dealt with the last part of this important passage above. Here the first part is the focus. It is an interpretation of the *Timaeus* (35a, 41d, 89e) put in conjunction with the teachings on the basic three kinds of people according to the *Republic* (435b-442d, 588b-590d). A decisive deviation from the *Republic* is that the intermediate kind of soul ruled by temperament in between those ruled by desire and those ruled by knowledge has been left out and is replaced by the overruling kind of soul that is of the directly unificatory kind. Plotinus in this way favours a peculiar reading of the *Timaeus*, according to which the partless component (*ho ameristos*) of Soul's mixture of Substance (*ousia*), Sameness and Difference in the primary kind of soul is stronger than its partite component (*ho meristos*). In the world, only the human soul transcends the partitions of World Soul by its partlessness (IV.4.32.7-13). According to Plotinus then, the human soul is "partless by nature" (VI.4.4.28) due to its unmixed (*to mê [mikton]*) or separate (*chôriston*, II.3.16.1-3) element. In the secondary and tertiary kinds of soul, the partless component becomes correspondingly weaker. Plotinus makes the inference that "the partless component" is a synonym of unity (VI.9.5.38-VI.9.6.15, VI.6.13.25-27, V.3.10.31-33, V.3.15.12-15), cf. his preference for substituting the name of the pupil Amelius with "Amerius" (*VP* 7.1-5).[108] The unity is either to be equated simply with the One corresponding to hypothesis I of Plato's *Parmenides* (137c-142a) or with the unity of one of the other seven hypotheses of unity in the same dialogue.[109] For we learn that particular souls (IV.3.5.11-14):

> are linked to the brevity of Intellect by that in each of them which is least partite (*ameresterôi*). They have already willed to be partitioned but cannot reach complete partition; they keep Sameness and Difference; each soul remains one (*hekastê hen*), and all are one together.

108. As distinct from Richter (1864) 79, who thinks this pun "uns gerade nicht zuviel Tiefsinn zeigt."
109. Cf. Dodds (1928), whose observations have been further supported by, e.g., Schwyzer (1944), Darrel Jackson (1967) and, somewhat more reluctantly, by Gurtler (1992).

In comparison with Soul, Intellect is not partite (*ou meristos, ameristos*). It does not render Intellect absolutely partless though, even when admission to Intellect will make the particular soul relatively partless (*ameristos*, IV.1[21].8, IV.9.3.10-16), for Intellect is both partite and not partite (IV.3.5.16-17, V.9.8.21-22). The following passage, on the other hand, is quite suggestive concerning the unity of the soul (IV.3.19.30-34):

> If however, that which is "partible in the sphere of bodies" holds the "partless" from a higher power, this same thing can be both partless and partible, as if it was mixed from itself and the power, which comes into it from above.

The purity of the partlessness in the human soul suggests to Plotinus – as foreshadowed already in lines IV.3.19.6-8 – that it corresponds (cf. VI.7.18.39-40) to the absolutely partless One of hypothesis I (137c-d) as a centre (IV.2[4].1.24, IV.2[4].2.38, IV.1[21].12-17), cf. the centre of soul implied by the *Timaeus* (34b). The two chapters IV.2[4].1-2 on the whole support this interpretation. For while in the beginning it seems to be enough that the partless component in the soul would only be its wholeness and its continuity, Plotinus ends up declaring it to be senseless if the continuity does not gather to a unity (IV.2[4].2.11-12) and quotes the *Timaeus* (35a) on the partless component together with his abrupt final verdict that "the Supreme is one only (*to d' hûpertaton hen monon*)." Also, Plotinus has certainly read the *Parmenides* (137c-d) arguing that partlessness is irreconcilable with wholeness, since this could only be a whole of parts. We must conclude that the partlessness or indivisibility – i.e. the individuality – of the soul is only guaranteed by the component that is the One itself, by absolute partlessness (V.3.10.31-33), called the centre of the soul (IV.2[4].2.35-42). Again, like the previous passage discussed (IV.8.1.6), the passage quoted above concerning unification "in actuality" (IV.3.8.14) in contrast to unification with "knowledge" or "desire", for instance, delivers additional indication of the presence of the One (cf. VI.8.20.9-19), and not only the presence of Intellect or Soul.

The following treatise alludes again to this *Timaeus*-inspired doctrine of the three ranks of human souls. Plotinus states in IV.4.4.1-5:

> Now in the intelligible world the soul also sees the Good through Intellect; for it is not excluded, so as not to come through to the Soul, since what is between them is not a body which would obstruct it – yet even with bodies between there are many ways (*pollachêi*) of arrival at the third level from the first.

Remarkably, while the direction of vision is from the Soul to the Good or One, the direction of arrival is from the One to Soul or the particular soul. The many ways of arrival are not in this connection many human philosophical ways of proving the existence of the One, but instead the many ways the One in fact appears to us, even when the steps between the soul and God, whether Intellect or the One, are not many (V.1.3.1-4). The first level is the level of the One and the third level is the level of Soul and particular soul, while the second level in between is the hypostasis of Intellect.

Plotinus refers to the remark in the *Laws* (894a), where the generation of a sensible thing is described and the coming into being of the sensible realm is explicitly said to be the third stage. So Plotinus is right to infer that the previous two stages are not sensible – they are not physical, but metaphysical. He straight away equates the first stage with the One, while he implicitly conceives of the second as Intellect.[110]

When Plotinus exhorts us to cleanse the inner, true statue in self-identity (V.9.5.40-41) and (I.6.9.7-15) "never to stop working on your statue" it is a reference to the *Phaedrus* (252d-e), according to which it is certainly not only the beloved one's statue one must make better but simultaneously one's own, to make it fit the demands of the beloved, cf. the *Lysis*, the *Charmides*, the *Symposium*. The latter aspect is emphasised by Plotinus, in so far as the beloved is the One (VI.7.31.8-18, VI.7.22.6-21, cf. VI.7.23.7-10).[111] More precisely, it is a reference to the teaching of the *Republic* (415a-c) with its myth of the three ranks of souls, their natures mixed respectively with gold, silver and bronze or iron (cf. *Cratylus* 397e-398b). A similar comparison appears when Socrates comments on the ideal types of the just and the unjust man presented by Plato's brother Glaucon in the *Republic* (361d):

> Whew! Glaucon, I said, how vigorously you've scoured each of the men for our competition, just as you would a pair of statues for an art competition.

Plotinus confirms that there is a kind of intellectual statue of justice (VI.6.6.37-42, cf. *Republic* 433d-e, 517d-e, Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1129b29-30), but far more radically, he sharpens the point, arguing that the living just man and absolute justice itself can be found within each one of us (I.2.6.22-23, cf. *Republic* 611c):

110. Plotinus here ignores that what he considers stages of Unity and Being are probably in Plato instead processes, transformations or movements into stages of Unity and Being (cf. *Laws* 818c, 819d-820a).
111. As distinct from Armstrong's note to his 1966 translation of I.6.9.13.

> True absolute justice is the disposition of a unity to itself, a Unity in which there are not different parts.

Among men, the just man most probably corresponds to a man "with a nature of gold", i.e. according to the emphasis on the *Timaeus* (35a, 41d, 89e), not the man in knowledge, but rather the man united with the One. Only the One is a Unity without parts, cf. hypothesis I of the *Parmenides* (137d), as the expression "different parts" is redundant on its own according to the Principle of the Non-Identity of Discernibles. He says (IV.7.10.42-52):

> For it is certainly not by running around outside that the soul "sees self-control and justice", but itself by itself in its understanding of itself and what it formerly was (*ên*), seeing them standing in itself like splendid statues all rusted with time which it has cleaned: as if gold had a soul, and knocked off (*apokrousamenos*) all that was earthy (*geêron*) in it; it was before in ignorance of itself, because it did not see the gold, but then, seeing itself isolated (*memonômenon*), it wondered at its worth, and thought that it needed no beauty brought in from outside, being supreme (*kratisteuôn*) itself, if only one would leave it alone by itself (*auton eph' heautou*).

This passage refers (once more) to the *Republic* (611e-612a), where it is prescribed to "knock off […] the earthy all around (*perikroustheisa […] geêra*)" until a partless soul without internal differentiations is found.

In perfect line with this, "the lonely" or "the alone (*to monon*)" is one of Plotinus' most striking epithets for the One (e.g., I.6.7.9, III.5.3.26, IV.2[4].2.54-55, V.5.13.6, VI.9.11.51, VI.7.1.39, VI.7.25.15, V.3.10.17, V.3.13.32, V.5.7.33, cf. *Philebus* 15a-c, 63b). Indeed, to become lonely spiritually is considered a precondition for unification with the One (VI.9.4.30-34, VI.9.11.51, I.4.10.30, I.6.6.10-11, I.6.7.9-10, III.1.10.11, IV.3.27.23-24, III.6.5.15-16, VI.7.34.5-8, V.1.6.11 & 51), for attainment of absolute loneliness and not being "with others" (*met' allôn*, III.6.5.16) will make identification with the One necessary according to the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles.

As we have already seen,[112] the Beautiful is occasionally used as a synonym for the One and gold is used as a metaphor for it. In a way, Plotinus reverses Plato's warning in the *Symposium* (211d) that material gold is not the Beautiful, by rather implementing the metaphorical sense of gold derived from the story of the exchange made by the hero Diomedes of a bronze armour for one of gold

112. Cf. section 'I.C.1. Envisioning the One' above.

from his adversary Glaucus in the *Iliad* (VI.232-36), as implied by Alcibiades, ironically using Socrates' voice later in the *Symposium* (218d-219a):

> "Dear Alcibiades, if you are right in what you say about me, your accomplishment is not just a common one (*ou phaulos*). If I really have in me the power to make you a better man, then you can see in me an overwhelming beauty that makes your own shapeliness deviate very much (*pampolû diapheron*) in comparison. But, then, is this a fair exchange that you propose? You seem to me to want more than your proper share: you offer me the merest appearance of beauty, and in return you want the thing itself, 'gold in exchange for bronze'. […]"

When Plotinus in the context mentioned above says that pure gold and the Beautiful can be found inside the soul (V.8.3.4-19 on the less pure golden statues of gods within Intellect as well), he therefore alludes to the doctrine that the One can be found inside the soul (I.6.5.50-53).[113] The wording there suggests a characteristic of the soul that is identical with the One "[…] when it is singled out (*monoumenos*) from other things and is alone by itself (*autôi de sûnôn monôi*)." Assuming the Beautiful is here a synonym for the One, as love ultimately is about unification with the One, the One must be found within the human soul (III.5.1.16-20, cf. *Symposium* 206c-d):

> And if someone assumed that the origin of love was the longing for Beauty itself which was there before in men's souls, and their recognition of it and kinship with it and unreasoned awareness that it is something of their own, he would hit, I think, on the truth about the reason (*aitias*) for it. For the ugly is opposed to nature and to God.

113. A number of scholars have touched upon the occurrence of this analogy in Plotinus – among them Helms (1915) 151, Boas (1921) 327, Inge (1923) 246, Theiler (1944) 222, 224, Bréhier (1948a) 186, Trouillard (1949) 355, Merlan (1963) 7, Trouillard (1961) 433, Trouillard (1965) 74, Blumenthal (1966) 61, Kélessidou-Galanou (1971) 390, Kélessidou-Galanou (1972) 90, Armstrong (1973) 17, Armstrong (1977a) 57-59, Miller (1977) 187, Bussanich (1988) 185, Husain (1992) 118 – but only a few scholars have investigated the significance of the doctrine any farther. Among them are Vacherot (1846) 384, von Ivánka (1956) 33, 37, von Ivánka (1964) 76, 82-89, Salmona (1967) 123, Hager (1973) 94-96, O'Daly (1973) 90-94, Beierwaltes (1973) 150-51, Beierwaltes (1974) 15, 34, Kremer (1981a) 45, Kremer (1981b) 167, Beierwaltes (1985) 133, 146, Wald (1990) 180, 183 and Ousager (1996) 139-44. I do not think the reference in Kremer (1981b) 167 n. 11 to III.8.6.9 proves the point, however, for it concerns the good contemplated in Intellect as within the soul, and is not strictly about the Good within the soul.

The doctrine of the One within the particular soul is stated explicitly at V.1.10.1-6:

> It has been shown that we ought to think that this is how things are, that there is the One beyond Being, of such a kind as our argument wanted to show, so far as demonstration was possible in these matters, and next in order there is Being and Intellect, and the nature of Soul in the third place. And just as in nature there are these three of which we have spoken, so we ought to think that they are present also in ourselves.

Plato's *Timaeus* (89e) already said that three distinct kinds of soul dwell in us, i.e. in each particular human soul. Plotinus connects (V.1.10.9-10) the doctrine with the tripartition in the *Republic* (588b-590d, cf. 435b-442d) of soul into "the inner man", comprising the true human self, as distinct from "the inner lion" of temper and "the inner many-headed beast" of desires (cf. VI.9.8.8-10, I.1.7.18-24, I.1.10.5-15, VI.7.6.7-VI.7.7.3). He has just added a specified tripartition of the strength of that inner man according to the previous myth of the three ranks of souls in the *Republic* (415a-c) and especially according to the account of the three ranks of souls in the *Timaeus* (35a, 41d). He suggests that the strongest kind of "inner man", the "true man" (I.1.10.7, cf. *Republic* 611b-612a), will be a god (cf. I.2.6.3-7), cf. *Phaedrus* (246b-e, 248a). According to the *Republic* (501b), the human image should be drawn from what Homer called its "divine Form and exemplar (*theoeides te kai theoeikelon*)", cf., e.g., *Iliad* I.131. The "true man", then, will even separate in possession of the One (I.1.8.1-15),[114] while the weakest "inner man" in fact coincides with a beast (VI.9.8.8-10, VI.7.6.21-VI.7.7.3, III.2.8.9-13, I.1.11.8-15). Even a self at this level, at its peak perhaps living as the shade of Heracles in Hades according to the *Odyssey* (XI.601-03), could in fact function as the preliminary self of a particular human soul (IV.3.27.1-10).

The "inner man" in Plotinus works significantly as a dialectical concept covering the ascent from the human soul's faculty of discursive reasoning (*logismos, dianoia*, e.g., V.3.3.31-39, V.3.4.7-10 & 14-15, I.1.7.14-24) to the Form of either the general or the particular man within Intellect (VI.7.2.6-8 & 51-56, VI.7.7.22, VI.7.8.31-32, VI.7.9.7-13, VI.7.18.44-46, VI.8.14.2-4,

114. As distinct from the simple equation between the 'inner man' and the 'true man' suggested by Sorabji (1999) 20 and Sorabji (2000) 293-94, who at these points further considers both 'men' in Plato as well as in Plotinus to be equated with the human soul's discursive reason. Cf. notes 115 and 155 below.

VI.2.14.19-22, III.2.7.8) and the corresponding particular intellect (V.3.4.9-14, V.8.2.43-46, V.8.13.19-22, II.5.2.20-22, VI.4.14.16-31, VI.6.15.10-15, VI.7.3.26-VI.7.6.21, I.1.11.1-8, I.4.16.1-6) and also its striving for what is beyond, i.e. for the One (V.3.4.11-19, III.2.14.16-20, III.9.2, III.3.4.1-10 & 44-48, I.1.8.8-15, I.1.10.5-10, I.1.11.1-8, I.4.4.6-20, I.4.13.5-6, I.4.16.3-13).[115] As Plotinus says (VI.9.2.17-21):

> […] if the being of the particular is a multiplicity, but it is impossible for the One to be a multiplicity, the particular will be different (*heteron*). At any rate, 'man' and 'living being' and 'rational' are many parts and these many are bound together by the One; though 'man' and 'one' are different (*allo*), and one has parts (*meriston*) and the other is partless (*ameres*).

In the background, then, there is also the corresponding suggestive analogy in the *Philebus* between the particular man and the Good itself. Both live in houses (61a-b, 62a-c, 64c), and Plotinus refers to the Good in its house (VI.7.35.7-10 & 18). Just as the Good has the divine Intellect as its "forecourt" (64c, cf. 22d-e) – quoted by Plotinus V.9.2.25-26 – every man has an intellect of his own (22c). The Good or the One, however, suddenly manifests itself by appearing within the particular house of the human soul (V.3.17.28-32).

Plotinus concludes analogously that the One potentially is in every one of us. It is also the end of ascent for all souls (V.9.2.7-10). Plotinus transforms the metaphor of the Good living in a house into the associated metaphor of the Good living inside a sanctuary (VI.9.11.17-32, cf. I.6.8.1-6, V.1.6.12-15). With some additional details, he presents the same story of the One living inside and with whom one can become united as a naked inner, true man (cf. I.6.7.1-11). In fact, to enter at all, one must enter oneself as a god

115. As distinct from Richter (1867b) 60-61, 86, Sorabji (1983) 162 and Sorabji (2000) 294, who imply that the man of the highest level should be equated with man within Intellect. For instance, this is probably correct in VI.7.6, cf. Daunas (1848) 149 remarking that the One is the principle or origin (*archê*) of man rather than man. The general dialectical and, most often, simultaneously ascending character of Plotinus' arguments, however, also shows in this treatise VI.7, which deals with the question of what man is from the start (VI.7.2.6-9, VI.7.4.28-30) and later explicitly treats absolute unification with the One (e.g., VI.7.34.13-14). Also, according to general Plotinian principles, it seems awkward that Richter and Sorabji's interpretation does not allow the highest element of man, which according to both Richter and Sorabji is Intellect, to be the same as the 'true man', which according to both authors is discursive reasoning. Cf. (previous) note 114 above and note 155 below.

(VI.7.35.16-19, cf. VI.9.8.8, VI.9.9.56-58). Plotinus says that the statues of gods, however, belong to the outer shrine and are left there during the perfect "intercourse (*sûnousian*)" of the soul with the One, and that "they become again the first things he looks at when he comes out of the sanctuary" (VI.9.11.18-22, cf. VI.9.7.23). Metaphorically, statues belong to the shrine of Intellect (III.5.9.9-13, III.2.14.24-30, cf. *Timaeus* 37c), probably because metaphorically, they stand in the Stillness (*stasis*) of Intellect. Among these statues are the ones of men, some with 'gold' mixed into their nature which, we might assume, would make it easier for them to unite – in a metaphorical sense only (cf. V.5.1.46-48) – with the pure fused and glowing gold of the One (I.6.1.33, II.1.6.50-54, cf. *Timaeus* 59b). Similarly, according to Plotinus' interpretation, "the holy golden cord" of discursive intellect (*tou logismou*) and the corresponding public law mentioned in the *Laws* (644e-645b) would be derived from this absolute 'gold'.[116]

All men have a passage to Soul, Intellect and finally to the One; however some are stronger than others in achieving their progress towards unification. Plotinus calls the man who unifies with either Intellect or the One the *spoudaios*, i.e. the excellent, proactive man, in contrast to the *phaulos*, the lazy, mean, common man mentioned in the *Republic* (423c-d, 519d), the *Timaeus* (90b-c) and the *Laws* (757a), cf. Aristotle, e.g., *Categories* (4a18-21 & 29-34).[117] The proactive man has potentially within either the "worth of wisdom or the purity of good" (I.4.16.1-9) but he will actually only obtain "the purity of good" through unification with the Good or the One, for this is the ultimate way for excellent proactive men to become "alone (*monas*)" (I.4.10.30). In III.8.6.34-40, it is explicitly said that the proactive man will already be turned to the One and to the Quietude (*to hêsûchon*) in himself. Since the One is described in the corollary Va of the *Parmenides* (162e) as involving Quietude, this passage presumably means that in order to obtain that Quietude he must be turned to the One within.

His guardian spirit will be God beyond Intellect, i.e. the One. When the excellent proactive man acts by Intellect, Intellect is the only thing that acts in him (III.4.6.1-3) – as his ruling self, we should add, in contrast to negligible other movements within the soul. By analogy, we should therefore expect

116. Cf. section 'III.B.4. The legislator' below.

117. Schniewind (2000a) 3-5 and Schniewind (2000b) 65 explore the Aristotelian and Stoic connotations of the word *spoudaios* and leave the Platonic sources for her thorough book, Schniewind (2003). Still, she unfortunately omits treating the essential passage of the *Laws* 757a.

that if the excellent proactive man acts by the One within, the One will be the only thing that acts in him as his Self (cf. I.4.4.8-25).[118] Because the particular human soul will always have a sort of good guardian spirit (*daimôn*) particularised as a Form within Intellect (V.9.11.16-21, II.1.5.20-21),[119] and as this guardian spirit ultimately will be the One or the Good within, this must be the ultimate reason why man in principle always must be well off (*eudaimôn*), regardless of his consciousness of it (I.4.9-11, cf. *Phaedo* 115d, *Timaeus* 90c).[120] Consciousness will mainly serve to actualise the One within in order for the human soul to become better or, rather, best off. The consciousness of the particular soul "would change around every day and fall from (*metapiptoi an kai ekpiptoi*) the stage of well-being", while the One within the soul does not (cf. I.4.7.5-11, VI.9.6.29), for it remains in Quietude.

In the chapter following the passage quoted above (V.1.10.1-6), Plotinus strongly confirms this interpretation in its exact wording (V.1.11.4-15):

> And if soul sometimes reasons about the right and good and sometimes does not, there must be in us Intellect which does not reason discursively but always possesses the right, and there must be also the origin and reason (*archên kai aitian*) and God of Intellect. He is not partible (*ou meristou*), but abides, and as He does not abide in place He is contemplated in many beings, in each and every one of those capable of receiving Him as another Self, just as the centre of a circle exists by itself, but every one of the radii in the circle has its point in the centre and the lines bring their peculiarity (*to idion*) to it. For it is with something of this sort in ourselves that we are in contact with God and are with Him and depend upon Him; and those of us who converge towards Him are firmly seated in Him (*enidrûmetha*).

We observe that at least all those beings that can receive the One as another self, contemplate the One. In accordance with our previous conclusions, this

118. As distinct from Armstrong's 1966 translation of *spoudaios* in I.4.4 as "virtuous", which, like his synopsis of I.4 at p. 169, suggests a purely intellectual stance, and as distinct from Schniewind (2000a) 6-7 and Schniewind (2000b) 65, 69, who merely considers the evidence for the *spoudaios* as a person living according to Intellect as in, e.g., I.4.9.17-23 or III.4.6.1-3. In the last passage the *spoudaios* is said to be one by whom Intellect is active. However, this will also be especially so for a person once consciously initiated to the One.
119. Cf. section 'I.B.6. *In-esse* and determinism' above.
120. In one sense of the term, then, the true "homeland" coincides with the "Isles of the Blest" (cf. *VP* 22.34 & 58). Cf. notes 310, 389, 391, 429 and 439 and also sections 'III.B.8. Homeland and empire' and 'III.C.1. The chair of Plotinus?' below.

observation does not mean that those who have received the One as another self are actually contemplating the One. Rather, the contrary is true, for they will all be one, i.e. the same One, and the One alone does not contemplate anything (V.6.1.10-13). To receive the One as another Self is "in a way like (*hoion*) having become another" (VI.9.10.15) – but, in fact, really to have become oneself. In unification, the former seer does not see anything else and does not distinguish the two (VI.9.10.14-15), because he has become one with the One (VI.9.10.20-21). "It was not really seen, but united with him" (VI.9.11.5-6).

The passage from V.1.11 cited just above says that the difference between human souls is not between those that are in contact with the One and those that are not, for they are all in contact with the One. The difference is between the human souls that can and have ascended "to be seated" in the One and those that cannot or have not (cf. IV.3.6.28-34, VI.7.6.15-18).

It is characteristic that in contrast to the whole process of unification with the One, in union with the One nothing in the soul is moved any longer (*ou gar ti ekineito par' autôi*, VI.9.11.9-10), cf. V.9.2.7-10, VI.7.35.1-4 & 42:

> Therefore the soul is not moved (*kineitai*) then either, because neither is the One.

This can only be because unification is complete and the One itself is absolutely immutable and immovable (VI.9.3.42-44, *oude kinêsis: pro gar kinêseôs kai pro noêseôs*, V.3.12.35-37, VI.9.6.43, cf. *akinêton*, V.1.6.25, *akinêsias*, III.2.4.14, *monê […] menein*, I.7.1.18 & 23 (cf. I.8.2.21-22), *pantê stêsetai*, V.3.10.17-18). Unification can only be complete if the One is within the soul as a likeness, a likeness of an effect that attains identity with its cause (cf. I.2.2.4-10, *Parmenides* 132d-133a).

In the course of V.1, Plotinus has demonstrated why he thinks that the particular human soul is honourable enough (V.1.3.1-4) to reach and prove the existence of God, as he announced at the outset of V.1.1.25-35 to be the aim – inspired by the proof of God from the causal priority and therefore divinity of Soul in Plato's *Laws* (892c-897b, cf. 966d-e) and the Platonic *Epinomis* (991d). The sufficient proof for both the One and the One within depends however upon obvious experience (cf. III.2.1.1-5). The personal ability to experience unity cannot be forced through to actuality by others. Just as it is said in the *Laws* (885c-d) on the existence of gods and the Soul, there will be no further sufficient evidence to teach (*didaskein hôs eisi theoi, tekmêria legontes hikana*) the "young" beginner without any experience of the sort (cf.

892a). Not having the "least appropriation of Intellect (*smikron nou kektêntai*)", for instance, the atheists are "without one sufficient reason (*oude ex henos hikanou logou*)" for their atheism (887e). So there is really no apodictic proof (cf. IV.7.15.1-2) but rather only an indication (*epideixis*, 892c) leading to the experience (cf. VI.8.13.47-49). Plotinus radicalises Plato's point when he says correspondingly (V.1.1.33-35):

> For if the objects of inquiry are alien, what is the point? But if they are akin, the investigation is suitable and discovery is possible.

This is again the doctrine of knowing 'like by like'. For, as Plotinus says (III.5.9.44-45, cf. *Philebus* 20d, 54c, 60b), "[…] certainly that which is altogether without a share in the Good would not ever seek the Good." He can even quote Heraclitus (DK 22B115) in support of the doctrine that the soul is both one and unlimited (VI.5.9.14-15, cf. VI.5.7.14-15, IV.6.3.70-71, IV.3.8.34-38) and reaches everything (cf. III.4.3.21-25, IV.4.2.20-22, I.1.13), at least everything in the sensible universe (II.1.4.16-25, cf. II.3.6.19-20), for since "Soul, sprung from God, is stronger than any bond" (II.1.4.16-18), the universe (*kosmos*) is contained in Soul (VI.5.9.14-23):

> "The soul has a self-increasing (*hauton auxonta*) ground (*logon*)", perhaps imagining it in this way, that it does not fail anything, but, remaining what it is, reaches to everything, and if the universe was larger its power would not fail to reach again to everything, or rather this universe would be in the whole of it. One must then not take the "increasing" literally, but [understand that it means] that it does not fail in being everywhere one: for its unity is of such a kind as not to be the kind of thing the size of which can be measured: for this belongs to another nature which feigns the One and is imagined as one by its participation.

In the end, Plotinus here contrasts the One in the Soul with the unity in sensible things presented as reminiscent of the hardly imagined unity of hypothesis VII of the *Parmenides* (164b-165e). The unity in Soul should not straight away be considered the same as the One of hypothesis I, but both the unity of Soul and the unity in sensible things imitate that One by necessity (cf., e.g., I.7.2.1-6, V.5.4.1-8, VI.5.1.7-18, V.3.15.10-26). Taken in connection with Plotinus' interpretation of the *Timaeus* (35a, 41d, 89e) and the reference to Heraclitus, however, we can infer that there is a way of ascent for the particular soul from the unity of Soul to the One of hypothesis I, increasing itself

(*auxeis […] seauton*) by the ascent through Intellect (VI.5.12.19-25). Calling the soul unlimited, Plotinus implicitly draws upon another kindred fragment of Heraclitus (DK 22B45):[121]

> You would not discover the limits of the soul although you travelled every road: it has so deep a ground (*logos*).

Plotinus' criticism of several other philosophers in this connection is as arrogant as anything Heraclitus said and it is a clear reference to him (IV.6.3.71-73, cf. DK 22B101 quoted in V.9.5.31, cf. IV.8.1.9-12):

> And in general it is not surprising that anything about the soul is different from what men have supposed because they have not examined it […].

According to Plotinus there is no reason not to allow the particular soul the same unlimited range as the hypostasis of Soul (IV.3.1.14-22). For this Heraclitean doctrine is in another passage implicitly employed by Plotinus to show the limitlessness of particular souls in their descent from the One (IV.3.8.38-41):

> And these souls, too, are not each what they are by some external limit, as if they were a definite size, but each is itself as much as it wants to be, and never goes outside itself as it proceeds […].

The statement comes after Plotinus' argument (IV.3.8.34-38) that the soul is infinite in power, for so is God (*theos*). A possible identification with God is presupposed for this argument to work, and the god is not just Intellect but the One itself,[122] which is said on many occasions to be infinite in power (V.5.10.21, II.9.3.5-7, IV.8.6.11, V.3.16.1-3, III.8.10.1, V.1.7.9-10, V.4.1.36, V.4.2.38, VI.7.32.19-20 & 28-32, VI.9.5.36-38, VI.9.6.7-11).

In conclusion, the particular human souls must in principle have unlimited access both downwards and upwards in the henological hierarchy (cf.

121. Alluded to by Bréhier (1928) 49, 69, Mamo (1976) 202 and Westra (2002a) 138. Cf. the commentary on Plotinus' adequate substitution of the self with *psûchê* in O'Daly (1973) 89.
122. As distinct from Armstrong's note to his 1984 translation: "*ho theos* in line 38 is probably *Nous*."

VI.7.21.6-VI.7.22.21, III.4.3.21-22).[123] For this to be possible, they must have all three original natures within themselves, not excluding the One itself (cf. IV.3.6.33-34, I.1.11.4-8). By identifying the One of hypothesis I of the *Parmenides* with the absolute Self, Plotinus in this way (cf. DK 22B101 also alluded to in I.1.13.1-3) gives the Heraclitean heritage of the Platonic *First Alcibiades* (129b, 130c-d) a rather subtle point:

> Socrates: Tell me, how can we find out what 'self' is, in itself (*auto to auto*)? Maybe this is the way to find out what we ourselves (*autoi*) might be – maybe it's the only possible way.
> Alcibiades: You're right.
> […]
> Socrates: Do you need any clearer proof that the soul is the man?
> Alcibiades: No, by Zeus, I think you've given sufficient (*hikanôs*) proof.
> Socrates: Well, if we've proven it fairly well, although perhaps not rigorously, that will do for us. We'll have a rigorous proof when we find out what we skipped over, because it would have taken quite a lot of study.
> Alcibiades: What was that?
> Socrates: What we mentioned just now, that we should first consider what the Self itself (*auto to auto*) is. But in fact, we've been considering what a particular self (*auton hekaston*)[124] is, instead of what the Self (*tou autou*) is. Perhaps that was enough for us, for surely nothing about us has more authority than the soul, wouldn't you agree?
> Alcibiades: Certainly.

The One within the soul appears elsewhere in the Plotinian corpus. Even when the context is mainly about Intellect, I take the statement in VI.7.9.14-20 (cf. VI.7.6.15-21) about degrees of thought to suggest a general rule of interior approachment:

> […] why are men not equally rational in comparison to each other? But one must consider that the many lives, which are like movements, and the many thoughts should not have been the same, but different lives and in the same

123. Cf. Lindsay (1902) 475: "Soul is, in fact, the central core of his system: everything, within and without us, is soul, and the trouble is just to make soul capable of explaining all the antitheses to be found in different spheres of being."
124. Reading Stephanus' *auton* instead of just *auto* as in Burnet's text.

way different thoughts; and the differences are, somehow, in brilliance and clarity, firsts and seconds and thirds according to their nearness to the first principles (*tôn prôtôn*).

For the author of treatise V.1, for instance, given its approximately suitable name *On the Three Primary Hypostases* by Porphyry,[125] those first principles can only be the One, Intellect and Soul (cf. the last chapter of the treatise, VI.7.42, or II.9.1.11-18), as the interior greatness of the particular soul is similarly said to be Intellect's worth of wisdom or the One's purity of good (I.4.16.6-9).[126] The Good will therefore be within the very Substance of the soul (I.8.12.5-7). There can be no equality of anything with the absolute measure, the One, if one does not have the selfsame as it (VI.7.32.20-21), and Plotinus suggestively adds in passing (II.3.13.33-34) that not all elements in us are equal either. So, concerning the One or the Good within, it will turn out as the world tells us according to Plotinus (III.2.3.31-33):

"[…] Everything in me seeks after the Good, but each attains it in proportion to its own power. […]"

In I.1.8.8-18 we find a passage that seems to support an interpretation that, in the former section, I have argued is insufficient, namely the interpretation of the soul's relation to the One as only one of mirroring:

But how do we possess God? He rides mounted on the nature of Intellect and true reality – that is how we possess Him; 'we' are third in order counting from God, being made, Plato says, "from the partless", that which is above, "and from that which is partitioned in bodies"; we must consider this part of soul as being partitioned in bodies in the sense that it gives itself to the magnitudes of bodies, in proportion to the size of each living being, since it gives

125. It has been doubted whether the One is properly reckoned a hypostasis in Plotinus. It seems to be implied by III.4.1.1-3, while it might be taken in a purely analogical sense from the other hypostases in VI.6.9.14 and VI.8.21.11 in the same way as it is indicated with the word *hoion* ("as it were") in VI.8.7.47 and VI.8.20.11. For *hûpostasis*, a word borrowed by Plotinus from Stoic philosophy, literally means "a sediment", cf. Dalsgaard Larsen (2001) 60, i.e. in Plotinus, a level of Being settled from the One, cf. V.1.6.25-27. The word had become a part of Plotinus' philosophical terminology transmitted through Alexander of Aphrodisias and Sextus Empiricus, cf. Rutten (1994).

126. As distinct from Pérez Paoli (1990) 3-4.

> itself to the whole universe, though the Soul is one: or because it is pictured as being present to bodies since it shines into them and makes living creatures, not of itself and body, but abiding itself and giving images of itself, like a face seen in many mirrors.

However, while occupying himself with unification with Intellect in most of this treatise (e.g., the final lines I.1.13.7-8: "For Intellect too is a part of ourselves and to it we ascend"), Plotinus also refers here (cf. IV.3.19.30-34 quoted above) to the *Timaeus* (35a, 41d, 89e). The mirroring mentioned is that made by the partible part of the soul, not by – in a paradoxical manner of speaking – the partless and impartible part. It is not explicitly said but unmistakably implied that we must have a part of the partless One within ourselves, cf. the beginning chapter in the same treatise about the soul (I.1.2.11-13) "receiving nothing from anything else, except what it has from the principles prior to it, those stronger principles from which it is not cut off". Again, these principles in plural prior to Soul must include the One.

Another passage that also resembles the mirroring theory is on the likeness of the One to the One within the soul (III.8.9.19-24):

> For, again, since knowledge of other things comes to us from Intellect, and we are able to know Intellect by intellect, by what sort of simple intuition could one grasp (*haliskoito epibolêi athroai*) this, which transcends the nature of Intellect? We shall say to the person to whom we have to explain how this is possible, that it is by the likeness in ourselves. For there is something of it in us too; or rather there is nowhere where it is not, in the things which can participate in it.

The likeness here is the likeness to God mentioned in the *Theaetetus* (176b), and the likeness is in fact radicalised as far as possible by Plotinus to potential identity with help from the *Republic* (613a) and the *Laws* (716c-d). Plotinus prefers to consider the denial of identity between the eye, i.e. the soul, and the sun, i.e. the Good, in the simile of the sun in the *Republic* (508a-b, 508d-509a) to be just a distinction between what is potential and what is actual. He does not exclude a full actualisation of the potential of the soul as the Good or God, i.e. the One.

Mentioning in the quotation above that there is no place where the One is not, Plotinus refers to hypothesis I of the *Parmenides* (138e). This statement does not mean that everything has access to the One by way of ascent as man has (cf. VI.9.7.28-30). Rather, it means that everything is dependent upon the

One, and that the unity everything has in order to remain just what it is stems from the One (III.8.10.12-32). The unity in Intellect, for instance, is reckoned by Plotinus to be the kind of unity found in hypothesis II of the *Parmenides* (142b-155e), while he reckons the unity accomplished by Soul as yet another subordinated hypostasis expressing the unity presented in hypothesis III of the *Parmenides* (157b-159b), cf. Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's* Parmenides (638-640).[127] These are the three unmistakably active hypostases, while other more passive parts of the Plotinian universe, intelligible as well as sensible, correspond to the five other hypotheses of the *Parmenides*.

This is similarly valid for the circumstances of human souls, for they are obviously not all initiated to the One. Potentially, they all have all the three main active principles in themselves, but few can avoid being influenced passively and decisively by exactly those active hypostases from the outside, as most naturally happens to beings in the sensible world, from Fate imposed by the World Soul (cf. IV.3.15.10-11, IV.4.32.4-13).[128] As we have seen, Plotinus refers to those who are influenced as men of the third rank, having souls determined by desire. They risk dispersing their efforts and consequently being reborn as animals or – as Plotinus even thinks more radically than Plato – as plants (IV.7.14.6-8). As we have seen, however, some rise to the level of Soul itself.[129] Few succeed in getting any further than discursive reasoning in order to reach the self-intellection of pure Intellect. Those who are able are the men of knowledge, of the second rank. Fewer again will have the first rank of soul to attain unification with the One.[130]

127. Cf. Dodds (1928) 135, Schwyzer (1944) 89.
128. Only partly investigated by Bowe (1998) with the otherwise suggestive designation 'False Unity' in the title.
129. Cf. chapter 'I.A. Unification with Soul' above, further investigated in section 'III.B.1. The king' below.
130. In her interpretation of the last words of Plotinus recorded by Porphyry (*VP* 2.26-27), D'Ancona Costa (2002) 520 thinks that "the All" in his probably correctly reconstructed exhortation "to bring back the divine in us to the divine in the All" would rather refer to the All of Intellect than to, e.g., the All of the World Soul. Unfortunately, her comparison with the *Timaeus* (28b-c) is quite unconvincing, as "the All (*to pan*)" in that context certainly stands for the world of sense. She is right that the implied manifold of "the All" could never refer to the absolutely simple One. At the same time, however, she ignores that Plotinus is not just talking of 'Intellect within' but of 'the One within' as well. Consequently, I think the last words of Plotinus could have a slightly different emphasis, and another meaning therefore, that would be in agreement with the text of the *Timaeus*, as rather pointing out the immanent power of the divine, whether understood as Soul, Intellect or the One, within all of the world (*en tôi panti*).

In the beginning of the most explicit treatise on this matter, V.1, the souls are said to have forgotten "their father, God" (V.1.1.1-2 & 8-11) and (V.1.1.5-10, V.2.2.8-10) to have made great use of the self-motion ascribed to the soul by Plato in the *Phaedrus* (245c), *Timaeus* (37a-b, 46d-e, 77b-c, 89a) and the *Laws* (894d-895c, 896a-b, 896e-897b). At the end of the treatise, this God is fully declared to be not only Intellect, but also the One potentially to be found within each of us. For, in the final chapter V.1.12, the eternal self-motion of the soul is referred to again (V.1.12.4-5) as the main reason why some actualise the One within and others do not. In other words, self-motion involves the risk of making errors. However, we must postpone the discussion of the relation between advantages and disadvantages of self-motion until the next part of the book.[131] We will now look for some possible confirmation for ascribing the doctrine of 'the One within' to Plotinus.

I.C.3. Inferences from Proclus and Augustine

In Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's* Parmenides 1081.4 we are told that:

> […] in fact one must rouse up the One in us (*to en hêmin hen*), in order that we may, if one may so presume to say, become able to some extent, in accordance with our rank, to know like by like. For even as by opinion we know the objects of opinion, and as we know by discursive intellect (*dianoia*) the objects of that faculty, and as by the intuitive intellectual element (*noêron*) in us we know the object of Intellect, even so it is by the One that we know the One.

Both Jean Trouillard and Werner Beierwaltes suggest Plotinus as the originator of this doctrine of Proclus.[132] The original Neoplatonism of Plotinus (205-70

131. Cf. chapters 'II.B. Distinguishable souls' and 'II.C. Determinism disrupted' below.
132. Trouillard (1960) 81-2, Beierwaltes (1965) 380 – both acknowledged by O'Daly (1974) 169. In contrast to O'Daly there, however, I think that Plotinus does more than "foreshadow" Proclus "in unsystematic form", for if this were the case, most doctrines in Plotinus would just be unsystematic foreshadowing. O'Daly's interpretation probably relies too heavily upon the authority of Trouillard (1960), who relies on merely peripheral passages on the issue in question (such as V.3.10.43-44, III.8.8.30-32 and VI.5.7.9-13) to conclude that Plotinus, in contrast to Proclus, was reluctant to equip the human soul with such internal Unity. Beierwaltes (1965) 380 on the other hand refers to the internal ability in Plotinus to receive the One at the peak of 'Intellect within' rather than to any real internal Unity as 'the One within'.

CE) was to a great extent the philosophical model of Proclus (about 412-85 CE) and his late Neoplatonism.

A supplementary argument from the main course of the history of philosophy can be made. Although such inferences are much weaker than arguments built upon evidence in the Plotinian text itself and fully dependent upon it, they still have considerable force along with that evidence. A similar doctrine can be found even earlier in Augustine (354-430 CE), especially in his writing *On the Trinity*. According to the Christian Augustine, we can find the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Ghost in different variations of ternaries within the soul (*animus*) or mind (*mens*) of every human being (e.g., VII.6.12, IX.2.2, IX.4.4, IX.4.7-IX.5.8, IX.12.18, X.11.17-18, X.12.19), cf. also *Confessions* (XI.20.26, XI.27.34-XI.30.40, XIII.11.12).[133] Like so many other tenets in the philosophy of Augustine, this doctrine is presumably inspired by his reading of Plotinus in Latin translations (cf., e.g., *Confessions* VII.9.13, VIII.2.3).[134] We know for certain that he read treatise V.1 (cf. *On the City of God* X.23),[135] where some of Plotinus' clearest affirmations of the doctrine of the three original natures within the particular human soul appear (e.g., V.1.10.1-6). Augustine was definitely not fluent in Greek, but he was after all (*On the Trinity* V.8.10-V.9.10) in conscious concord with the Christian Nicene Creed re-formulated in Greek from Tertullian's Latin *una substantia,*

133. Cf., e.g., Rist (1994) 76, Friis Johansen (1997) 78-81, Friis Johansen (1998) 614-15 or the general table of Augustine's ternaries in du Roy (1966) 537-40.

134. Cf., e.g., Grandgeorge (1896), Boyer (1920), Dinkler (1934), Barion (1935) and Dahl (1945), who even in a quite conservative, Christian way all rely heavily on what Augustine happens to reveal explicitly. For instance, in his chapter on the psychological parallels between Plotinus and Augustine, this approach leads Dahl (1945) 63-73 to fail to appreciate Plotinus' teaching of 'the One within'. The historical and systematic approach of more recent publications of scholars such as von Ivánka (1964), du Roy (1966) and O'Connell (1968) is far more satisfying (e.g., du Roy (1966) 257 compares another parallel tripartition of soul in Plotinus and Augustine), while Nörregaard (1923) and Schmaus (1927) represent an intermediate stage as partly inspired by the convincing but, by a churchly reckoning at the time, rather subversive study of the Neoplatonic influence on Augustine by Alfaric (1918), e.g., 376, 379-81, 399, 515-27. Alfaric was later excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church.

As a matter of detail, Grønkjær (2002) in his auspicious subtitle *En systematisk undersøgelse af Augustins indoptagelse af platonismen* [A Systematic Study of Augustine's Reception of Platonism] employs the word "systematic" in a special sense derived from the discipline of "systematic theology", i.e. dogmatics, at the faculties of (Christian) divinity, as if general systematics, a natural theology included, were not independent of belief.

135. Cf. Alfaric (1918) 376 n. 2 for more evidence.,

tres personae (cf. *Against Praxeas* XXXI.1) into Athanasius' *Volume to the Antiochian Synod* (41-42) presented in Alexandria in 362 CE: *mia ousia, treis hûpostaseis*.[136] Augustine was simply fertilising Christian views on personhood by reintroducing restricted associations connected with the Plotinian hypostases into Christian dogmatics.

The origin of his doctrine of the Trinity within the human soul is easier to understand as precisely an ingenious Christian transformation of a similar doctrine in Plotinus. In Plotinus, the Trinity corresponds to the three original principles of the One, Intellect and Soul.[137] Since it is said in *Genesis* 1.27 that man was made in the image of God, as a Christian, Augustine underscores theistically that the Trinity is only in the human soul or mind as an image of the Trinity (*On the Trinity* IX.12.17, X.8.11, X.12.19, XIV.4.6). According to Augustine, God is only mirrored in man but is not Himself present in man (cf. *On the Literal Meaning of* Genesis VII.2-3). If this doctrine is more than just a copy of the doctrine of Plotinus, it is probably a theistic transformation of what in Plotinus, with far fewer theistic prohibitions, appears monistic (cf. *On the Size of the Soul* II.3, III.4, *On the City of God* IX.17).[138] If not evidence on its own, it supports the claim that man and the One in some sense both are and can become identical according to Plotinus.

136. O'Connor (1982) eminently elucidates several advantages obtained by Augustine for Christian theology by referring to persons rather than to, e.g., hypostases, cf. also Pérez Paoli (1990).

137. Cf. Hager (1973) 94, 97, 100, only slightly modified by the predominantly dogmatic objections of Grandgeorge (1896) 91-94.

138. Cf. von Ivánka (1964) 191-93, du Roy (1966) 265, Kremer (1981b) 167 and, partly, O'Connor (1982) 139, 143, as distinct from O'Connell (1968) 124, 130: "At all events, nothing Augustine says against the soul's substantial identity with God refers to Plotinus' doctrine on the subject." In his appendix on 'Plotinus and Augustine's final theory of the soul' O'Connell (1987) 337-50 still refers to the Plotinian view of original man as ultimately man within Intellect.

    Whereas Kremer (1981a) 54 puts forward a theistic interpretation of unification with the One, Kremer (1981b) 176 surprisingly suggests a monistic interpretation of unification with the One, so that he is no longer obliged to think that Plotinus already held only the mirroring view of God within the soul that later became Augustine's. John J. O'Meara (1958) alludes to Augustine's conception of the relation: "In this synthesis [of Christianity and Neoplatonism] Augustine placed great hope; but in accepting Christ in the Incarnation and rejecting the notion that the human soul was of the same divine substance as the Father he had already bowed to the authority of Christ and put aside the reasoning of the Neo-Platonists."

I.C.4. Annihilation or preservation?

So does unification with the One mean annihilation of the particular human self?[139] If so, how could one survive an ultimate unification with the One as a human being? For if the supreme Self is identified with the One, how could this One then suddenly accustom itself to having a particular human body? An answer to the last questions will have to wait till the end of next part of the book,[140] while investigations to answer the first question are carried out here.

Certain passages suggest that the particular self is both preserved and annihilated in its unification with the One. This does not have to be self-contradictory or mystical – in the sense of mysticism that would not only superficially contradict but also completely deny ordinary philosophical discursive reasoning. Preservation and annihilation could both be attributed to the particular self, corresponding to a certain succession of stages of unification.[141]

I.C.4.a. Preservation of particularity

The first stage is easy to distinguish. In the soul's ascent from Intellect to the One, the soul clearly has a vision of the One. The soul, however, will come to the One, which on its own is beyond vision and thought (VI.7.40.27). Unification cannot therefore come about by thought but only by a presence stronger than knowledge (VI.9.4.1-3, VI.9.7.8-10, VI.9.8.24-35, III.8.9.29-32, V.3.13.32-33), cf. *Republic* (509a). We have seen that this stronger presence is not only "akin to that power which comes *from* the One" (VI.9.4.28, my italics), but that the kinship or likeness must come from the power *of* the One within the human soul (VI.9.4.27). It is suggested (VI.9.4.10-30) that soul and the One coincide when the simple vision of the soul coincides with the light from the One. Even if vision of the One from the stance of the pure, primary part of Intellect (VI.9.3.26-27) is less multiplying than real thought, however, vision cannot imply anything less than at least a duality between seer and seen.

Plotinus makes the comparison with the lover's gaze upon the beloved, even when the lover is for a while "brought to a halt in the beloved (*en hôi erai*

139. Cf. Vacherot (1846) 589-90: "C'est là le point le plus délicat de la doctrine de Plotin."
140. Cf. chapter 'II.C. Determinism disrupted' below.
141. As distinct from Carone (1997) 185-86.

anapausamenou)" (VI.9.4.18-20). The metaphor for this psychological state is probably again taken from sexual intercourse (cf. VI.9.7.23-26, VI.9.11.16-21, I.6.7.6-14), corresponding to "the intercourse (*koinônia*)" between activity and passivity in Plato's *Theaetetus* (156a-b, 157a) and "the intercourse (*koinônein*)" the soul has with very different levels of reality according to the *Sophist* (248a-b).[142] There is a suggestion of this erotic metaphor in VI.5.10 as well, where it is assured that we all touch the same One,[143] after ascending to our particular Forms in Intellect (VI.5.10.27-29 & 40-42). Even if "there is no part with which we do not touch God", and this relation is perhaps on the edge of transcending thought with the self being full of intelligible light (VI.9.9.54-58) – or perhaps does transcend thought in exactly one respect (IV.7.8.10-14, cf. Aristotle *On the Soul* 407a15-22) – by oneself having become a god (VI.9.9.58), still, the duality between seer and seen is preserved at this stage. Exactly because (IV.4.44.2-3) "that which the contemplator contemplates is himself (*autos*)", a contemplator cannot be purely one.

I.C.4.b. Annihilation of the particular self

For real unification to happen, the One within and the One itself must coalesce. Lovers in their loving behaviour only imitate that perfect union (VI.7.34.13-16), so the metaphors of sexual intercourse are presumably mainly metaphors suggesting unification and, finally, ultimate unification (cf. I.6.7.6-14).[144] At the final step just before that unification, the One becomes the only active part. No thought regarding the One is possible during this stage, when causality only works in a one-way-direction from the One to the soul (VI.9.7.8-10 & 14-16). At this stage the soul can be lifted further only by the One and no longer by itself (VI.7.22.17-19):

142. Cf. Thesleff (1980) 111: "Sometimes Plotinus is very explicit. His overtness in depicting the union in terms of erotic imagery has often seemed embarrassing to earlier generations of scholars." Among them, Thesleff reckons Arnou (1921a), Rist (1964a) and Rist (1967), but he could not possibly accuse Miller (1977) 186, Meijer (1992a) 307 or Chadwick (1999) 67 of this. Cf. subsection 'III.B.9.a. Gender, sex and love' below.
143. The same point is made a great deal more explicitly sensual concerning the female Wisdom (*Sapientia*) in Augustine *On the Free Will* II.37.14, perhaps directly or indirectly in his case also inspired by the comments on (feminine) virtue (*arêtê*) in the *Republic* (617e).
144. Cf. Bussanich (1988) 183: "P. does not choose to represent union itself in erotic terms." Also Bussanich (1988) 187: "P. does not employ eros-language to define the unitive state itself." As a serious modification of his view, however, see my interpretation of VI.9.7.20-26 in section 'III.B.10. Efforts of individuals' below.

> And as long as there is anything higher than that which is present to the soul, it naturally goes on upwards, lifted (*airomenê*) by the giver of its love.[145]

Plotinus therefore speaks of being able "to receive" the One (V.1.11.9-10, VI.9.3.24, VI.9.4.25-26, III.8.9.29-32, cf. IV.3.1.14-15) as a precondition for unification, even when the One cannot be completely absent from anyone (VI.9.7.28-29, cf. III.8.9.22-24), cf. hypothesis I of the *Parmenides* (138e).

The only passage that seems to openly contradict the monistic interpretation of a possible identity of a decisive aspect of human soul and the One in fact actually confirms this interpretation (II.9.9.45-54):

> Then the man of real dignity must ascend in due measure, with an absence of boorish arrogance, going only so far as our nature is able to go, and consider that there is room for the others at God's side, and not set himself alone next after God; this is like flying in our dreams and will deprive him of becoming a god, even as far as the human soul can. It can as far as Intellect leads it; but to set oneself above Intellect is immediately to fall outside it. But stupid men believe this sort of talk as soon as they hear "you shall be better than all, not only men, but gods" […].

We must remember that Plotinus wrote this as a correction of the Gnostics and their "stupid" adherents (cf. *VP* 16). Remarkably, his point is not that it should be impossible "to be at God's side" – as the Jews and Christians claimed it was – but that one cannot just set oneself above Intellect by arbitrary choice as soon as one hears about that opportunity. Our nature does not allow it. Taking the last step depends upon the direct activity of the One putting us there. The difference is between having or not having ascended to the point where

145. In partial support of Meijer (1992a) 321-23 and Meijer (1992b) 68-69, as distinct from both Rist (1967) 225 and Bussanich (1994) 5327: "Now, he [Rist (1967) 225] correctly rejects the notion that the One works on the aspiring soul and lifts it up towards union." Also as distinct from Underhill (1919) 491, who thinks that all synergy between the human soul and the absolute is precluded in Plotinus and that the relationship could be perfectly compared to the mountaineer's relation to a mountain. Also Blakeley (1992) 59 has a suspicion of that same interpretation presenting the One as "lacking in agency" – which is wrong if absolute activity is considered absolute agency, cf. section 'II.C.5. The absolute Self' below. I disagree with Meijer (1992a) when he insists on calling the activity of the One (arbitrary) theistic "grace", when it is in fact an absolutely necessary, independent and self-sufficient activity.

the One takes over and becomes our Self (V.1.11.9-10). So just as Plotinus was neither a Jew nor a Christian,[146] he was not a Gnostic either.

It appeared from the previous discussions of the stages of ascent that the soul ascends in order to obtain unification of the self. It can also be fulfilled. Absolute unification is, as a tautology, and also in fact, according to Plotinus, an absorptive unification with absolute Unity, the One. The One is literally the only individual,[147] and everybody else is only an individual in so far as he actually unites with the One within (cf. VI.5.1.14-25). For Plotinus says about man that (III.2.14.16-20, cf. I.4.4.11-15, II.9.2.10-12):

> Even man, in so far as he is a part (*meros*), is a particular (*hekastos*), not all. But if somewhere among parts there is something else which is not a part, by virtue of this, that thing below, too, is all. But man in his particularity, in so far as he is a particular being, cannot be required to be perfect to the point of reaching the summit of virtue; for if he did he would no longer be a part.

The problem had been raised by Plato in the *Symposium* (207d-208b) and the *Theaetetus* (166b-c) whether a person is ever the same or always different (the problem referred to by Plotinus in IV.7.5.23-24), or, as in the *Sophist* (251a-c) and in the *Philebus* (14c-e), how a person can be one and many at the same time. Already in the *Phaedo* (78c), Plato had Socrates presenting this argument concerning the immortality of the soul:

> Is not anything that is composite and a compound by nature liable to be split up into its component parts, and only that which is incomposite (*asûntheton*), if anything, is not likely to be split up?

He carries on (78d) denying that "each thing in itself" or "the self of anything that is (*auto hekaston ho estin*)" could ever change. For Plotinus, any

146. Although Charles-Saget (1985) 96 underscores that the One is something other than the Christian God, she at the same time, without sufficient argumentation, renders an apparently Christian-inspired theistic interpretation of the relation between the self and the One as one of insurmountable difference: "The opening up of the self does not imply fusion with the ineffable. The Principle [i.e. the One] remains in itself, and is apprehended in the midst of ecstasy, as ground and source of difference. The self is a case of such difference."

147. As distinct from the moderately confusing formulation of, e.g., Letocha (1978) 77-78: "Il importe de saisir combien les mises en garde de Plotin sont claires: ontologiquement, il n'y a pas de multiple. Il n'y a donc pas d'individualité."

relative changelessness could only be ensured by the immobility of the One. He definitely understands the presence of divine Intellect within us to be a precondition for our accessibility to the Forms according to the *Parmenides* (133a-134e). Since the issue of this whole dialogue is unity, one should expect pure Unity, the One, to be within us as well. Consequently, Plotinus would understand another utterance in the *Parmenides* (129c) as Plato's ultimate hint indicating the One as the true Self:[148]

> But what is there surprising in someone pointing out that I am something which is one (*hen tis*) and also many?

In the *Laws* (644c), a similar hint appears in passing. The One being the Self is just as empirical a matter as the experience of an embodied self or a self within Intellect. Generally speaking, experience does not only come from sense perception in the way Aristotle suggests it does (*Posterior Analytics* 100a3-14). It is an Aristotelian mistake to identify the empirical self and the sensible, embodied self and to call the embodied self "the individual identity".[149] For strictly, individuality cannot be found among divisible bodies but, according to Plotinus, only in the One. Logically as well as etymologically, it comes down to a pure tautology,[150] cf. V.3.15.10-14 (referring also to the one-many of hypothesis II of the *Parmenides* 144e):

> What then is more deficient than the One? That which is not one; it is therefore many, but all the same it aspires to the One: so it is a one-many. For all that is not one is kept in being by the One, and is what it is by this 'one': for if it had not become one, even though it is composed of many parts, it is not yet what one would call a Self (*tis auto*).

148. As distinct from, e.g., Sorabji (2000) 293: "Plato believes that the true self is the intellect." McCabe (1994) 208-11 refers to most of the passages, but does not treat them in further detail in her presentation of Plato's view of 'The Unity of Persons' 263-300, except for the passage from the *Theaetetus*.
149. Cf. Blakeley (1992) 67 and as distinct from Vacherot (1846) 590-92, Graeser (1972) 118, 124-25, Gerson (1992) 255, Carone (1997) 180, Sorabji (1999) 20-21, 24-25 or, e.g., Rist (1994) 129, who speaks of "the fact that, for Plato, individuality, being a mark of variation from the perfect, and thus a defect, must be qualitatively overcome." Mainly due to our different understandings of what it means to be "an individual", Sorabji (2000) implicitly suggests a denial of the question in his title 'Is the true self an individual in the Platonist tradition?' whereas I recommend a clear confirmation, cf. note 151 below.
150. Cf. note 31 above. Unfortunately, Plotinus is not treated and, therefore, not reckoned as among Greek philosophers at all by, e.g., Gill (1996), cf. Dodds (1960) 5, Gerson (1992) 254: "The culmination of Greek philosophical thinking about the self is found in Plotinus."

In search of unity, "everything seeks not another, but itself" and "if it is going to be itself, all its parts must tend to unity: so that it would be itself when it is one somehow, and not large" (VI.6.1.10-11 & 19-20). To obtain that level of unity, selfhood or individuality is impossible for, e.g., extended bodies in themselves (cf. V.8.1.26-28, II.1.8.23-27).[151] Instead, the One is the only individual because, as pure Unity, it is the only thing strictly indivisible and so also the real Self of all human souls.[152] Plotinus therefore expressly calls the One the highest Self or subject in VI.8.14.42: "for He is primarily Self (*kai gar prôtos autos*) and Self beyond being (*kai hûperontôs autos*)",[153] corresponding to the description of the Good in the *Republic* (509b). Completely overlapping with Plato's wording on the Good is the comparable description in Plotinus already referred to above that "to find oneself", one must become a Self (*autos*) that is beyond Substance (*epekeina ousias*, VI.9.11.38-42) and therefore Formless as is only the One (VI.9.7.14-16, VI.9.3.4 & 43-44, VI.7.34.1-4).[154]

151. On the other hand, referring to the notorious atomist view (II.4.7.20-28, III.1.2.9-17, III.1.3.1-29, IV.7.3), Plotinus declares the *further* indivisible "Form" of matter (*eidos atomon*, VI.7.14.18, cf. VI.7.17.22, VI.2.2.8-40, VI.2.22.11-32, VI.3.1.15-16, VI.3.9.36-37) the lowest in the order originating from the both Formless and partless (*ameriston*, *ameres*) One. For Plotinus, matter is the utmost *infima species*, cf. "the Form (*idean*) of the infinite" in the *Philebus* (16d-e), the circumstance that "Substance (*ousias*) is chopped up into […] infinite parts" in the *Parmenides* (144b-c) and the similar logical standing of space or "the Form (*eidos*) of the reason led astray" in the *Timaeus* (48a, 49a, 50b-51b, 52a-b). The translation of the atomist Greek *atoma* into Latin *individua* was due to Cicero, cf. Kobusch (1976) 300. As distinct from the interpretation of Kobusch (1976) 301, 303 n. 14, however, the original, completely opposite sense of "individual", the One, is superior to and not subordinate to the universal in Plotinus. The One is preeminently superior to the universal resulting from division (*diairesis*) called the *eidos atomon*, cf. *Sophist* (229d). It is the latter (and definitely not the former) kind of "individual" that forms the basis of the philosophy of Aristotle, cf. the weighty presentation by Frede (1978).
152. As distinct from Armstrong in his 'Introductory Note' to his 1984 translation of V.3 p. 69, who cannot be right that "the intelligent soul […] is our true self" while admitting "the need to go beyond Intellect to find the soul's true end."
153. Cf. O'Daly (1973) 90-94 and Wald (1990) 178-83. To simply translate *autos* with Self as a noun and not just as a pronoun would not contradict the view of Henry (1960) 448 referred to by Bussanich (1988) 181-82 that there should be no word for 'self' in Greek. For what Henry (1960) 448 in fact says is that the pronoun *autos* translated "self" is employed by Plotinus as a Greek designation for what more or less corresponds to "person" from the Latin. In conclusion, the systematic importance of the concept of a "self" in Plotinus considered, the translation of *autos* as a noun seems fully justified, cf. O'Daly (1973) 89.
154. Cf. the interpretation of VI.7.34.12 by O'Meara (1993a) 106. Despite an adequate analysis of the details of unification, Meijer (1992a) 310 surprisingly concludes the contrary: "So ultimately the (true) self is not regained, but temporarily lost in the total union." He does not attempt a further definition of what he understands by the true self as opposed to the One. Cf. also Meijer (1992b) 64, 66.

The likeness and kinship to God (cf. VI.9.4.27, VI.9.11.32) has to be completed, for the nature of the soul demands unity (VI.2.11.24-25, VI.9.5.40-41). Without a complete identity of the One and any human being's real Self, it would be quite difficult to make sense of a statement like the one in VI.9.7.28-32 where Plotinus refers to the *Parmenides* (138e):

> Plato says the One is not outside anything, but is in company with all without their knowing. For they run away outside it, or rather outside themselves. They cannot then catch the one (*hon*) they have run away from, nor seek for another when they have lost themselves.

As appears from the context, "the one they have run away from" is the One. For instance, those immersed in matter will be ignorant of themselves and of their Self (VI.1.29.27-36). The One or the Good is their Self, and closer approachments to it therefore make them more themselves (VI.7.27.16-19, cf. *Philebus* 20d, 52d, 54c, 60b):

> But why will anything be a good for itself? Is it because it is the most akin to itself (*oikeiotaton autôi*)? No, but because it is a part (*moira*) of the Good. This is why those who are clear-as-the-sun (*tois eilikrinesi*) and more good have a closer kinship with themselves.

They consequently turn away from self-hatred (cf. *Laws* 907c-d) and will like themselves better, because solely the One essentially likes Itself (VI.8.13.41-47). It is by "possessing the Good" that each particular being "wills itself" and "belongs to itself" (VI.8.13.20-21 & 24). Strictly speaking then, only in so far as the soul does not depart from the One, it does not "depart from itself" (VI.8.9.32-33, V.8.11.23-24, V.1.2.9) as was promised concerning the soul apparently on its own in the *Phaedrus* (245c) and as is confirmed by Plotinus. There cannot merely be a similarity between the One and the Self. There has to be complete identity; they are the same.[155]

155. As distinct from Vacherot (1846) 591, who says: "Il ne faut pas oublier que, selon Plotin, autre chose est l'individualité, autre chose l'essence de l'homme, à tel point que l'essence est en raison inverse de l'individualité!", and Vacherot (1864) 391, who speaks of unification with the One as "l'anéantissement de toute individualité", as distinct from Armstrong (1967a) 261: "[…] the One is not simply identical with our true self […]", as distinct from Parma (1971) 115, who asserts that the real self of man is within Intellect and also as distinct from Sorabji (1983) 157, 160 speaking of unification, especially unification with the One, as "loss of self", and again as distinct from Sorabji (1983) 161, who concludes from seven passages in Plotinus, i.e. I.1.7.13-I.1.8.8, I.1.10, I.1.11.1-8, II.9.2.4-10, VI.4.14,

It means that at unification with the One, any *particular* self will be annihilated (cf. IV.3.5.4-5),[156] just as any particular thing must be annihilated if it is going to become a pure Unity. Nothing is left of particularity at all.

→ VI.7.6 and V.3.3.34-39, that a higher soul above the level of lower soul but below the level of Intellect "is most truly our self." With the exception of one passage, i.e. II.9.2.4-10, of which aspects will be dealt with further here below, I have already presented my general interpretation of these passages above, in section 'I.C.2. The One within'. Further aspects of some of them will be dealt with below as well. The passage II.9.2.4-10 is quite paradigmatic for the difference between our interpretations. It refers to a middle of the soul but does not say that this should constitute the self of the soul. Although I.1[53].7.12-24 and, also, I.2.6.7-8 & 15 and I.4.9.28-30 do suggest this, the suggestion is highly relativized and corrected in I.1.10-13 as already concluded in VI.7[38].4.32-VI.7.5.2. Correspondingly with V.3.3.34-39, which is corrected in V.3.4.7-14, V.3.7.3-9 and in V.3.17.21-38. In the same way as Richter (1867b) 60-61 and Sorabji previously, Gurtler (1988) 228-38 overrates the status of passages like V.3.3.34-39 in order to conclude that the human self is discursive reasoning rather than even Intellect. Cf. notes 105, 114, 115, 132 and 152 above.

As will become increasingly clear below, the passage in its context suggests to me instead that the absolute extreme of the One is most truly the Self and, consequently, also our self. Sorabji's interpretation, for instance, is presumably inspired by the interpretations of Blumenthal (1966) 61 and Armstrong (1977a) 57, who suggest that in his earlier writings Plotinus distinguishes between a soul-like self and a more transcendental particular Form of such within Intellect, cf. note 105 above on Armstrong's comments to his 1966 translation of I.1.2 and his 1967 translation of III.5.3.

'The self' in Plotinus, however, refers to quite varying contents, depending upon the level of the person's ascent towards the One that is under discussion, cf. I.1.10.5-6, I.1.11.4-8, I.1.13.1-2, II.3.9.14-19 and O'Daly (1973) 25-27, 89, 93 & *passim*. While indeed aware of this aspect of unification in V.3 as well, Beierwaltes is still remarkably reluctant to call the One our Self, and, much like the only slightly more particularist interpretations by Blumenthal, Armstrong, Sorabji and Gurtler, he prefers the 'Averroist' view that Intellect is our true self in Beierwaltes (1990) xiii, xxv-xxvi, Beierwaltes (1991) 103, 107-10, 123, Beierwaltes (1995) 100-01, 103 and Beierwaltes (2001a) 85, 99-100, 103-05, 115 (and the flap text as well). That is inconsequent interpretation.

Blakeley (1992), on the other hand, rightly distinguishes three different types of the self's unity with the One, which are all dialectically employed by Plotinus: unity-with-difference, unity-without-difference and unity-and-difference. In this part of the book, I discuss the first two types, while further discussion of the last type apart from the stages of unification already dealt with above can be found in section 'II.C.1. The causal nexus of ultimate unification' in part 'II. Freedom'.

156. Cf. Carone (1997) 183-84. She mistakenly considers the loss of particularity and the loss of a particular self, however, a loss of individuality and the self as such. Beierwaltes (1995) 103 correctly affirms that: "– Es hieße Plotin sicherlich mißverstehen, wenn man ihm unterstellte, daß in dieser im übrigen Lebensgang punktuell, herausgehoben sich vollziehenden Einung mit dem Einen selbst das Selbst des Menschen aufgehoben, vernichtet oder zerstört würde." However, Beierwaltes does not explain how this preservation of selfhood is possible, cf. (previous) note 155.

Unification is not only a subjective, psychological or intellectual unification in its preliminary stages, but in the last stage also complete henological unification.[157] According to one manuscript, Plotinus refers (VI.1.26.27) to the identification with the One as "absolute unification (*to autoenôsis*)"[158] in contrast to mere participation in other kinds of unity like the ones presented in the seven other hypotheses of Plato's *Parmenides*. So former selves are completely pushed aside when the original Self is restored.[159] As Plotinus says (IV.4.18.14-15): "'We ourselves (*hêmeis de*)' refers to the essential part of us", and indeed, during ultimate unification, awareness of the One as the dominant part of ourselves or simply our Self will arise. It is the goal of the human soul to become itself by "becoming and living by the Beautiful and Divine", "which no one masters" (II.3.9.14-31, cf. *Republic* 617e). Just as Intellect at a stage became the self, even when it was not the self from the beginning of the ascent (V.3.3.21-V.3.4.4), we should analogously expect the One to become the Self at the ultimate end stage of ascent. In fact, this is the case. At the level of Intellect, one was "looking at oneself with oneself" (V.3.4.29) and at the level of unification with the One, when looking (*blepein*) is no more an option, but only seeing (*idein*), (I.6.7.9-10, cf. *Philebus* 52d) "one sees with one's self alone that Self alone, clear-as-the-sun, simple, pure (*autôi monôi auto monon idêi eilikrines, haploun, katharon*)", eventually, in ultimate union to give up seeing or contemplating (*theasasthai*, V.5.4.1-11) something else and altogether become "One with oneself (*hen pros heauton*)" (VI.9.10.21, cf. V.5.4.6-10).[160] For one can only see the One by putting oneself outside and becoming Different from the absolute Self of the One (V.8.11.12-13).

157. Cf. Mamo (1976) 204, 206.
158. Manuscript U, adopted in the 1983 *editio minor*, while not yet adopted in the 1973 *editio maior* that reads *auto hen*.
159. Cf. Dodds (1960) 7, Kremer (1981b) 186. Here, I share company with Carone (1997) 183 in her criticism of, e.g., O'Daly (1973), who after raising the question on p. 5 and p. 84 replies p. 85: "The distinction between the One and the self is to be maintained. As was remarked at the beginning of this chapter [pp. 82 ff], this distinction is made after the event and is *logical* – for the nature of mystical experience belies it. But, as we said there, the distinction is nonetheless justified, for the self is a *reality*, as was since shown, in the moment of *unio*, and not merely afterwards – despite the fact that one is *not aware* of the distinction at that moment." According to the logical Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles, there would be and is, however, no logical reason for any distinction during unification.
160. Cf. Zeller (1919) 669, who speaks of "nicht mehr […] einer Anschauung Gottes, sondern nur Gottessein" and "ununterscheidbare Einheit", while at the same time as distinct from Bréhier's note to his 1938 translation of VI.9 p. 169, who thinks that "l'initié cesse d'être lui-même".

The One without Difference (*heterotêta*), differentiae (*diaphoras*, VI.2.9.9-11 & 14-16, cf. VI.9.11.8) or discriminations (*diakekrimena*, V.3.15.31) is always present (cf. V.5.9.11-26, V.5.12.11-14 & 33-34), while we are only present to it when we are without a trace of that generic Difference (VI.9.8.24-35), cf. hypothesis I of the *Parmenides* (139b-d). Plotinus in fact comments on what the superficial interlocutor Dionysodorus in Plato's *Euthydemus* (301a) thinks is obviously begging the question:

> But in what way can the different be different just because the Different (*heterou*) is present with the different?

In Plotinus, souls are essentially only different from the One and from each other by Otherness (IV.4.17.35-37, cf. V.3.15.38-39) and more exactly by the Different (IV.3.5.4-8, VI.4.4.25-27, cf. V.8.13.7-9, V.1.6.50-53), cf. *Parmenides* (143b, 146a-b, 146d).[161] For instance, it is stated quite explicitly that if Difference and Sameness were the major elements of thought, the One would be present to the soul at a stage when its thought no longer contains Difference or, consequently, Otherness. Then they would be exactly the same, one, just as when other things contain no general Otherness or Difference, they will lack plurality and become a unity (VI.9.8.24-35, VI.2.6.13-20, cf. VI.7.41.13-14, V.1.4.38-39, V.8.11.4-22, IV.4.2.8-10, IV.4.4.11-14, V.3.10.24-25, VI.9.6.42), cf. *Parmenides* (156b). Or, rather, as the one relation, the One becoming the same as the soul, is strictly not possible, cf. *Parmenides* (139d-e), the soul would be the same as the One.[162] As Plotinus says, using a less intellectual verb to depict our relation to the One (V.5.10.5-7, cf. "rush (*aixai*) to the One" in V.5.4.8):

> Who, then, could capture (*heloi*) its power altogether? For if one did capture it altogether, how would one differ (*diapheroi*) from it? Does one then grasp it partially (*kata meros ara*)?

161. Cf. Vacherot (1846) 441 and partly de Corte (1931) 50, and as distinct from the view of "modern philosophers", i.e. Aristotelians and materialists, on universals such as Difference being inert according to Sorabji (2000) 297. In Plotinus, on the contrary, as something utterly particular, something material is inert (*argon*) in itself (VI.7.2.19-23).
162. A further profound subtlety is to be found here, as Plato's Greek word for Sameness or Identity (*to tauton*) in the *Sophist* (254e) etymologically seems to be a double substantivisation or "identification" of Selfhood (*to auton*), i.e. really *to 'to auton'*.

Obviously, the absolute partless could not be grasped partially. It will then be impossible to make a distinction (VI.7.34.13-14, cf. V.5.8.21),[163] or, as he tells us (III.8.9.51-53):

> But as for the First being each one separately (*kath' hekaston*), any one of all of them will be the same as any other; then all will be confounded together (*homou panta*) and there will be no distinction (*ouden diakrinei*).

This obviously works due to a purely logical point, i.e. the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles. By transgressing into the One's absolute difference from everything else (V.3.10.49-50), man becomes a true individual. Human particulars are only individuals in so far as the One within is present as their Self.

I.C.5. Unity or plurality first?

Man becomes a true individual by absolute unification with the One, though apparently not as a particular man. What next? Surely Plotinus did not vanish off the face of the earth or simply die bodily any of the four times he unified with the One while Porphyry was with him (*VP* 23.16-18).[164]

163. Cf. Ninci (2001) 467, although he employs some unnecessary looseness of language concerning the strictly univocal concept of 'identity' throughout his article, e.g., p. 463. Cf. also Armstrong's note to his quite appropriate 1988 translation of VI.7.34.13-14: "for there is nothing between, nor are there still two but both are one (*ouden oud' eti dûo, all' hen amphô*)" that misleadingly suggests a theistic reading. In the note, he explains that "*hen amphô* is always used by Plotinus of a perfect union in which the two united retain their distinct natures", and refers to what he believes to be similar use in IV.4.2.29 and V.8.7.13, cf. also Seidl (1985) 258-59, 264. However, in VI.7.34.13-14 (as in, for instance, V.3.10.3 as well), *hen amphô* is obviously used in a connection in which distinction is excluded, cf. Maréchal (1927) 298. The only thing common to all three texts mentioned by Armstrong is that nothing is in between two things, be it between Intellect and the soul (IV.4.2.29), between Intellect and the sensible universe (V.8.7.13 – the expression *hen amphô* does not appear here, however), or between the One within and the One itself (VI.7.34.13-14). Hadot (1990-91) 489 seems to beg the question in favour of a theistic interpretation: "Quand Plotin dit en parlant du Bien et de l'âme: 'Les deux sont un', il ne dit pas: 'Les deux sont l'Un' car précisément, ils sont deux." Gerson (1994a) 223, 293 n. 50 makes basically the same theistic interpretation of the expression *hen amphô* as do Seidl, Armstrong and Hadot. Cf. notes 77, 81, 83, 99 and 101 above and note 175 below.
164. Cf. and at the same time as distinct from Carone (1997) 185-86: "[…] those who deny identification between the One and the self at that stage seem equally to overlook the

To understand this, it would be of no help to employ an Aristotelian assumption about the pre-existing plurality of everything. For, according to Plotinus' reading of Plato (e.g., *Parmenides* 166b), pure Unity or the One is proven to be the very metaphysical point of departure (e.g., V.9.14.1-6, V.4.1.21-39, III.8.9.3 & 39-42, III.8.10.5-14, IV.8.6.1-11, IV.9.4.6-8, VI.9.1.1-2, V.3.15.27-29 & 41-43, V.5.13.33-38, cf. VI.5.5.1-3).[165] The fact of plurality would only work perhaps as an epistemological aid to understand the absolute Unity causing a plurality of particulars. It would be an Aristotelian fallacy to assume that the One's existence relies on the fragile modality of particulars; quite on the contrary, because, as Plotinus underscores time and time again (e.g., V.3.13.16-19),[166] the One is absolutely modally necessary in contrast to everything else arising from it including human experience or thought. It would also be a mistake if one were to insist on finding plurality in the absolute Unity, for it is the simple nature of absolute Unity not to possess any distinction (e.g., V.3.15.30-31).

In this doctrine, there is no denial of philosophy or yielding to mysticism considered as something contrary to philosophy. The evidence provided for that obscurantist interpretation of Plotinus is not conclusive at all. It is true that in VI.8.11.1-3 he says that "we must go away in silence and enquire no longer", but the next lines say explicitly that it must be so because (VI.8.11.4-5) "every enquiry goes to an origin (*eis archên*) and stands still in it". The origin causing absolute Stillness cannot be anything other than the One. We have already dealt with passage V.5.8.1-5 above and shown that the One's appearance for anybody is law-determined. It does not occur by chance, for (VI.8.14.14-16):

> […] as one goes towards the simple it is not possible to take chance up with one, so that it is impossible for chance to ascend to the simplest of all.

→ reasons given above in support of identity and denial of distinction. But, on the other hand, even if that is true, one should not deny that Plotinus does seem to have his motivations, as we have seen, for wanting the preservation that Armstrong and others speak about; a different question is whether he can philosophically cater for that need. In sum, it doesn't seem to me that Plotinus has any rational means of solving the problem of the preservation of individual identity at the level of union with the One, much as he may need it to account for the individuality of the experience afterwards."

165. Cf. Henry (1931) 321: "C'est l'axiome fondamental de tout le plotinisme." Similar points can be found in a reading of Plotinus' model, Plato, as recently done by McCabe (1994), where an interpretation of Plato made independently from Plotinus' interpretation appears, cf. her p. 64 n. 20.
166. Cf. chapter 'II.A. Sufficient reason behind causes' below.

The fact that ordinary thought will epistemologically not have a place during unification and that the soul in God (*enthousiasas*) also will be in quiet solitude (*hêsûchêi erêmôi*), thoroughly standing (*katastasei*) as in "some sort of Stillness (*hoion stasis*)" as VI.9.11.12-16 (cf. I.4.6.17-19) says, does not by any means make unification metaphysically impossible. Solitude is simply an epithet of the modally necessary existing One according to Plotinus' reading of the *Philebus* (15a-c, 63b), and the Quietude (*hêsûchia*) and Stillness (*stasis*) are both attributed to the unmoved (*akinêton*) One in the corollary Va of Plato's *Parmenides* (162b-163b) without thereby implying any necessary unphilosophical procedures.[167] Like the blindness that hits a freed prisoner in the simile of the cave in the *Republic* (515c-516a), infatuation is a common experience in any ascent. However, it does not make the experience of any ascent the same (cf. V.8.10.4-11). It does not remain just a gaze of the bodily eyes, and at one point it stops being a gaze altogether (cf. V.5.12.1-14).

Since, then, the particular human soul unifies with this absolute Unity and thereby loses ordinary sight, while the corresponding particular body can still be seen by, for instance, Porphyry, it must mean that even when the particular must be annihilated in unification with the One, it is at once recreated anew.[168] For the One is the absolute and necessary creativity behind the subsistence of everything. The creation of particularity anew is therefore not dependent upon unification. On the contrary, the point is that the One's necessary creativity of varying degrees of particulars (V.3.16.1-5, V.3.17.10-14, II.9.3.7-12) does not and cannot stop during unification. In addition to the subsistence of everything else, it implies the subsistence of the particular intellect, the particular soul and the particular body of a person even when the One or rather the derived unity within the soul has become identical with the One itself and then has become 'the One within'.[169]

Does this not introduce a plurality into the One, if one or more persons are unified with it? Are "individuals" not a contradiction in the term for

167. As distinct from Carone (1997) 186 n. 35. She refers to Mortley (1975) but his interpretation pp. 367-68, 377 is far more adequate. Too many scholars, as, e.g., Armstrong (1977b) 184, actually seem to have over-emphasised the role of "negative theology" in Neoplatonism in a voluntaristic, theistic way, while consequently overlooking the important part it plays in the pure logic of Plotinus' Neoplatonism, where it appears as an alternative designation for the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles as applied to either Soul, Intellect or, ultimately, the One, cf. Ousager (2003).

168. Cf. Mamo (1976) 204-05. Armstrong's conclusions on these matters in the 1966 preface to his translation pp. xxvii-xxviii are fairly acceptable, whereas his premises are not, cf. notes 99 and 100 above.

169. Cf. Kélessidou-Galanou (1971) 395-96.

something that can only be individual in the singular?[170] According to the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles, there is no such risk. Plotinus talks of "others at God's side" (II.9.9.47-48). It only causes a contradiction in terms of language – not reality – if the particulars do not coincide totally with the One, i.e. with the pure Unity of hypothesis I in the *Parmenides*.[171] The One remains indistinguishably itself while the particulars remain distinguishably themselves also after the One has become the Self of a particular. As Plotinus laconically announces in VI.9.10.17-18:

> Here also they are one when they come together, though two when separated.

He warns us against spatial metaphors that might lead to the misconception of a plurality in the One while he apparently employs one himself in order to show how the One can be conceived of as the Self of more particulars at once. It is the metaphor of concentric circles often used by Plotinus and taken over from Plato.

This metaphor is found in different guises in Plato. The spindle of physical Necessity with eight whorls inside one another and with their rims showing as circles from above in the *Republic* (616b-617d) is one example. Most explicitly, the *Laws* (893b-d) describes circles or cones moving around an immobile centre. Physical motions are clearly taken as a metaphor for metaphysical motions later in the *Laws* (897c-898b), where the motion of Intellect is compared to cyclical locomotion (*periphora*), and the Soul's movement is said to imitate that cyclical movement. The same trait appears in the account of how Soul moves the sensible world around its centre in the *Timaeus* (34a-35a, 36c-37c). Remarkably, the cyclical movement is around some centre that is distinct from both Soul and Intellect, cf. *Laws* (898a), and being distinct in this way, it corresponds to the Good in the simile of the sun of the *Republic* (508e).[172] In the *Republic* (436a-437a) for instance, the Soul can simultaneously

170. Without observing the possible problem arising here, Daunas (1848) 114-16 similarly affirms that the absorptive union of human souls with the One is attained beyond Intellect in order not only to become God but "Gods".
171. In strict Plotinian terms, McCabe's (1994) interpretation of Plato implies such a contradiction in terms when in her title she calls Forms in the plural *Plato's Individuals* (cf. note 31 above). According to Plotinus, this is strictly a double contradiction in terms, since a Form could never be completely individual as is the One (cf. note 189 below).
172. As distinct from, e.g., Planinc (1991) 209, who presupposes that the divine Intellect is the Good in Plato.

be standing still (*hestanai*) and moved (*kineisthai*), like a top spinning on its axis (*to kentron*). It is not certain in the specific context, but taken together with other passages of Plato, it would suggest for a reader like Plotinus that the centre itself is to be distinguished from Soul. The *Phaedrus* also suggests a principle higher than Soul, particular souls and Intellect. When a soul by the circles of its own thoughts approaches and participates in the cyclical motion of Intellect (247d, cf. *Timaeus* 39d-e, 47b-c, *Laws* 897c-d), and even becomes like a god (248a), the participation in Intellect is like dancing in a choir around a supreme god (247a, 252d).[173] The same imagery of a circle with a distinguished centre is at work. A somewhat similar passage in the *Seventh Letter* (342a-344b) diverges slightly because a circle is there considered the centre of other circles. The reason for this deviation is probably found in Plato's announced succession of the historical Parmenides (*sphairês […] messothen*, DK 28B8.43-44).[174]

Plotinus, however, employs the metaphor of concentric circles in the plural, put forward most explicitly in Plato's *Laws*, to say that even if intellects and their corresponding souls have spatially different bodies, their common single centre can still be exactly the same in the midst of Soul and Intellect (VI.5.5.1-23, III.8.8.36-38, VI.5.4.22, V.9.6.12-13, IV.3.17.12-14), namely the Good or the One (IV.4.16.20-25). This centre does not even occupy an intellectual space (IV.2[4].1.17-29, VI.9.8.22-33). The soul is no geometrical figure, but if it were, there would not be any major difference between a centre of a circle in the sensible realm here and the One considered as a centre (VI.9.8.10-16). By such clear adumbration, Plotinus implies that Plato rightly regarded the point as immaterial (cf. Aristotle's testimony in the *Metaphysics* 992a19-21).[175]

Although perhaps wholly united in our core with the One, we "dance", i.e. move with our intellects, souls and bodies around the One (VI.9.8.35-45), as was suggested to Plotinus in the *Phaedrus* myth. In contrast to the hypostasis of Soul that must remain a circle around the centre (II.2.1.31-34), the self

173. Cf. the preliminary remarks of chapter 'I.B. Unification with Intellect' above, as distinct from the approach in, e.g., Menn (1995) 60: "*Nous* is the ultimate *poioun* of the world […]." Menn (1995) 16 does not acknowledge any higher level in Plato than Intellect, not even in the passage of the *Phaedrus* referred to here. Plotinus, on the other hand, would say that the supreme god and ultimate *poioun* according to Plato could only be the One of the *Parmenides*.

174. Cf. Palmer (1999) 3.

175. In support of the adequate criticism by Mamo (1976) 207-09 of the insistence of Rist (1967) 227 on talking of spatially extended dots rather than centres in Plotinus. As Mamo forcefully argues, if the centres coincide, there must be one singular (identical) centre only.

inside the particular human soul ascends to the centre as it is already there potentially (cf. III.8.2.9-15). In unification, the particular soul metaphorically (*hôsper*) joins its centre (IV.2[4].2.38, cf. IV.7.6.11-15) to the centre of everything (VI.9.8.19-20, VI.9.10.17).

Particulars are compared to lines from the centre of the One. Just as everything is created from the powerful centre (VI.8.18.7-32), so was the circle of Soul created as a line from what is partless, ultimately not just from Intellect (cf. *Timaeus* 30c), but with an element deriving from the very centre of the One (VI.9.8.1-22, IV.1[21].12-22). Only this derivation could allow for the peculiar possibilities of human souls. While specific sensible particulars are compared with radii from the centre (V.1.11.10-13, cf. IV.7.6.11-15), only particular human souls are compared to concentric circles around the One within as the centre of every one of them.[176]

We are told that the particular soul has an origin, a middle and, in matter, a lowest point (*eschata*, I.8.14.34-35). Since the One potentially is inside each of the particular human souls and the One is both logically and therefore causally the first according to Plotinus, we can infer that the particular human souls have their origin in the One directly and not just from either Intellect or Soul.[177] Plotinus seems to state this without any hesitation (VI.9.9.20-24):

> It is these virtues the soul conceives (*kûei*) when filled with God, and this is its origin and end (*archê kai telos*); its beginning because it comes from thence, and its end because its Good is there. And when it comes to be there it becomes itself (*autê*) and what it was (*ên*); for what it is here and among the things of this world is a falling away and an exile and a "shedding of wings".

The context of VI.9 tells us that the passage is not only about the soul's life in Intellect compared to its life in the sensible realm; it is about soul's complete unification with the Good, i.e. the One. Its Good is ultimately nothing but the One. It is an effect of unification that the soul does not grasp the virtues but conceives them, just as the One does.

176. Trying to interpret the coinciding of centres in a theistic way, Hadot (1990-91) 489 [cf. Hadot (1987) 27] refers to the image in VI.8.18 of the One as the centre and the particular soul as a line or ray from the centre and says "Le rayon a beau revenir vers le centre pour coïncider avec lui, il ne sera jamais le centre." However, the ray certainly begins in the centre, so if the self ascends along the ray of the soul, it should certainly finally end within the centre. As distinct from, e.g., Lindsay (1902) 475 it must be said that the soul as such is not then the absolute Self.

177. Cf. Salmona (1967) 54.

This interpretation is confirmed by a close reading of the adjoining treatises IV.3-5, which according to Porphyry are all *On Difficulties Concerning the Soul*. Passages are drawn from these treatises to exhibit the apparently insoluble problem of how souls could ever be distinguished from each other when they come to unification with Intellect and, lastly, with the One.[178] In fact, Plotinus consistently presents it the other way around, as he says preliminarily (IV.3.1.14-16):

> And we must consider how the gods are received into the soul. But we shall consider this when we investigate how the soul comes to be in a body […].

In the beginning, the particular soul leaves Intellect to settle in a body, while the opposite will be reversion to Intellect (cf. IV.4.5.12-13 & 22-23, IV.4.3.1-6, IV.8.1-11). Again, in IV.3.2.58-59 and IV.3.5, Plotinus considers how souls are distinguished and become different from each other when they come from the same Soul. This reflection presents an immediate analogy with how the souls all spring forth, each from its own particular intellect in Intellect (cf. IV.3.14.4-5, IV.4.3.1, VI.4.16.23-36, VI.5.12.19). They have (IV.3.5.10-11, cf. III.7.11.19-27) "passed, as it were, from brevity to multiplicity (*hoion polû ex oligou genomenai*)." The distinction of the souls happens, we are told (IV.3.5.14-18), analogously to how their intellects are discerned from each other in Intellect already. They all come "from the single (*ek mias*)" Soul or Intellect. That they also come from the One itself is clearly suggested in the following chapters, where Plotinus refers to the three ranks of souls, of which the primary rank consists of those who use the power inherent within every human soul to unify themselves (IV.3.6.28-34), i.e. those who attain the power of the One within. The One is elsewhere referred to as the original state of the soul and what it essentially "was (*ên*)" not only in the preceding quotation from VI.9.9.21, but in similar formulations in the already quoted IV.7[2].10.44-45 and VI.9[9].4.28:[179]

> […] when someone is as he was when he came from Him (*hotan houtôs echêi, hôs eichen, hote êlthen ap' autou*) […]

– and also later in VI.7[38].34.30-32:

178. Cf. Blumenthal (1971b) 55-56, 59, Carone (1997) 177 n. 1.
179. Cf. Kremer (1981b) 169.

> […] the soul does not say it is happy when the body tickles it, but when it has become that which it was back then (*ho palai*), when it is fortunate (*eutûchei*).

In Plotinus, however, procession is prior to reversion, as unity is both logically and causally prior to plurality (e.g., IV.9.4.6-8). We have not been cut off or separated from the absolute Unity, the One (VI.9.9.7-8). As he says (VI.5.1.8-12):

> […] and men would not want to be cut away from this unity (*henotêtos*). And this is the firmest principle of all, which our souls cry out, as it were (*hôsper*), not summed up from particular instances, but preceding all the particulars and coming before that principle which lays down and says that all things desire the Good.

A basic problem that appears throughout Plotinus' works and noticed by several scholars is simply how anything ever arose from the One by "the first movement" (e.g., V.1.6.22-27, V.5.10.14-15, VI.3.22.1-2, V.4.1.1 & 21-39, III.8.10.14-17, III.9.7.1-2, V.9.14.1-6 & 12-13, cf. VI.2.6.13-20).[180] The One is always without Difference (*heterotêta*, VI.9.6.42, VI.9.8.34), while Difference or Otherness only arise with movement (II.4.5.28-31, cf. VI.3.22.1-2 & 35-41, V.1.6.1-19, VI.4.4.24-26, IV.8.6.1-6, V.2.1.1-9). As he says in II.4.5.30-31:

> For this reason Motion, too, was called Difference (*heterotês*) because Motion and Difference sprang forth together.

Now the first movement is the movement that brings Intellect into Being by some kind of "boldness (*tolma*)" (VI.9.5.29, cf. III.8.8.32-38). There is an obvious parallel between the boldness of Intellect coming into separate existence and the boldness of particular souls coming into separate existence (V.1.1.3-5),[181] cf. *Laws* (731d-732a). The question is whether this confirms that the core of unity of the souls comes directly from the One rather than just their

180. Cf. Bréhier (1928) 40-41, Armstrong (1937) 61, Schwyzer (1951) 569, Beierwaltes (1967) 11-12, Bonetti (1975), Gersh (1978) 54, Reale (1983) 158-59, Dillon (1987) xvi, Ousager (1995b) 135, Kremer (1995), Perl (1997) 301-02, Hankinson (1998) 409, 415.

181. Cf. Baladi (1971) 97 and Armstrong's adequate note to his 1984 translation of V.1.1. On the historical background to the concept of *tolma*, cf. Dihle (1982) 22-24.

intellects coming from Intellect. For instance, the latter option seems to be explicitly declared in IV.3.5.8-18, but it could be combined with the former.

Another indication that the distinction of souls belongs to another stage than the discernment of Intellect from the One could perhaps be found in the designation, which Plotinus employs in V.1.1.4 talking of "the first Difference (*hê prôte heterotês*)" of souls in contrast to the first Otherness (*to allo*), which is the result of Intellect's coming into Being according to VI.3.22.1-2 (cf. VI.7.34.13-14). As II.4.5.30-31 shows, however, Difference is also used as a designation for Intellect's distinction from the One, probably because, while Otherness implies Difference, in comparison with the indifferentiation of the One, any Difference or differentia (*diaphora*, VI.9.8.32, V.1.4.41), no matter how weak, also implies an Otherness in relation to the One, cf. hypothesis II (143b, 146a-b, 146d) and corollary IIa (155e-157b) of the *Parmenides*. A passage on the ultimate purification of the human soul confirms in reverse that Otherness is its impurity (I.2.4.4-7, cf. I.6.7.1-11, IV.7.10.30-52, VI.2.6.13-20):

> The virtue in the process of purification is less perfect <than that in the achieved state, for the achieved state of purification is> already a sort of perfection (*telos*). But being completely purified is a stripping of everything alien (*allotriou*), and the Good is different from that.

The soul's weakness is then the co-presence in it of something Other or alien (*allotriou*) that makes it impure (I.8.14.21-24). In possible distinction to some other philosophies, e.g., Aristotelianism, in Platonism, logic or at least deep-structure logic, i.e. ontology or henology, is considered to have causal force.[182] Unity is an exhaustive point of departure and the (logical) Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles implied above has univocal causal force. For (V.1.4.41, IV.3.5.1-8, VI.4.4.25-26, VI.9.8.29-35, V.1.6.50-53), according to the corresponding inverse (logical) Principle of the Non-Identity of Discernibles, everything, not excluding bodies, must be distinct from the pure Unity, the One, and from each other either by general Difference (*heterotês*) or by a differentia (*diaphora*). As we have noticed above, differentiation is mainly prior to any embodiment, especially when it comes to the human soul.

182. As distinct from Sorabji (2000) 297, cf. section 'II.A.1. Reason and cause in Plato and Plotinus' below.

From the other evidence considered, then, it seems as if the truly immortal part of particular human souls – as distinct from Soul and ordinary souls, which are derived only indirectly from the One through Intellect (cf., e.g., IV.8.6.1-6) – is in a way derived independently and directly from the One itself. That corresponds to the partless component of Soul mentioned in the *Timaeus* (35a). For the difference between the souls and their father, God, is ascribed in V.1.1 first of all to the boldness that made them spring forth from God, and secondly to general oblivion of their origin (cf. IV.3.17.24). The God and father of human souls mentioned here (V.1.1.1-2 & 8-11) is probably the One, since it accords well with the role of the Divine Craftsman and "Father" of all souls that have access to the divine from the *Timaeus* (28c, 37c, 41a, 41c-42e). In the *Timaeus*, that father is apparently considered a god distinct from both Intellect and Soul. Other indications are the reference to the "Father of the cause" from the Platonic *Sixth Letter* (323d) and the metaphor of the Good as a "Father" of analogous offspring in the beginning of the simile of the sun in the *Republic* (506e) that is equated with the One's relation to Intellect later in the same treatise, V.1.8.4-8, cf. *Republic* (508b). Plotinus compares (VI.7.30.28) the latter relation to the *Iliad*'s (V.426, XV.47) mentioning of the "Father of gods and men smiling". Correspondingly, playing on the tale of the young Telemachus reuniting with his father in the *Odyssey* (XVI.154-212), in V.1.6.50-53 he tells us that:

> Everything longs for its parent and loves it, especially when parent and offspring are alone (*monoi*); but when the parent is the highest good, the offspring is necessarily with Him and separate from Him only in Difference (*heterotêti*).

The allusion to separateness only by Difference in this passage (cf. *Euthydemus* 301a) refers rather to the moment right after descent than to any following state of oblivion of the descent. Considered as a relation between a biological father and his child, it is not immediately convincing, even if we take it in a purely psychological sense without any incestuous undertones. Instead, the passage must be understood in a henological sense (cf. II.9.2.3-4), as is also the case when the same state is described further in VI.9.9.33-34 (cf. V.5.12.35-37):

> The soul then in her natural state is in love with God and wants to be united (*henôthênai*) with Him; it is like the noble love of a girl for her noble father.

We have already dealt with the first of the following lines above, but the continuation is quite informative as well (VI.9.7.28-34, cf. I.6.8.21):

> Plato says the One is not outside anything, but is in company with all without their knowing. For they run away outside it, or rather outside themselves. They cannot then catch the one they have run away from, nor seek for another when they have lost themselves. A child, certainly, who is outside himself in madness will not know his father; but he who has learnt to know himself will know from whence he comes.

In the first lines of the following chapter, VI.9.8.1-8, it is similarly said that the soul that has not forgotten but "knows itself (*oiden heautên*)", will know that it is running around "something not outside but a centre" within the circle of Soul, which is derived – probably indirectly – from that centre (*aph' hou ho kûklos*). It is said independently, however, that the particular soul who knows itself knows that it "is from it (*aph' hou esti*)", the centre. "And we must consider that men have forgotten that which from the beginning (*ex archês*) until now they want and long for" – by necessity. However, there can be no intellectual recollection (*anamnêsis*) of it (V.5.12.5-14), for what has been forgotten is beyond Intellect. Also, in VI.7.22.14-19 Plotinus speaks of the One as "lifting up the souls as it were by their memory (*hoion têi mnêmêi*)" (cf. *Philebus* 20b), for the ordinary memory of particular souls belongs to a stage below the hypostasis of Soul (cf. *Philebus* 34a-c).[183] Likewise, it is claimed in V.3.7.7-9:

> If then the soul comes to know that God, learning by His powers, it will come to know itself since it comes from there and has received what it can […].

In another, slightly paradoxically phrased passage (II.9.2.10-12), our soul is said to have once been part of the most Beautiful, as the partless Soul still is, cf. *Timaeus* (35a). Assuming again that the most Beautiful is a synonym of the partless One, the partless core of the particular human soul will have its origin in the One (cf. III.2.14.16-20, I.4.4.11-15). For, according to the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles, only one thing, the One, could be completely partless.

In all, the indication is that the individual element of the particular human soul is directly derived from the One,[184] which follows logically, for 'the One

183. Cf. sections 'I.B.1. Memories of the body' and 'I.B.2. Potentiality or actuality of Intellect?' above.
184. Cf. Vacherot (1846) 381-84, Meijer (1992a) 319.

within' could not possibly be derived from something particularised and, therefore, of weaker unity like Intellect or Soul. One could not purify what was not there already, nor could one logically forget oneself's Self being the One if one had not once been the One oneself.

The beginning of chapter IV.4.3, for instance the first two lines, speaks of the exit of the particular soul from Intellect descending into Soul by embracing its selfishness (*to de hautês aspasamenê*) and wanting to be Different (*heteron*) as an alternative route for the particular soul who could not endure the One (*ouk anaschomenê to hen*). The soul is here either said to have a double option of exits from Intellect, or the embodied soul is said to have subsequently descended from both the One and Intellect, or, as I suggest, both things are implied at the same time. For in I.2.4.12-15, Plotinus says something quite similar about the soul:

> Should we call it something like the Good? Yes, but not a nature capable of remaining in the real Good, for it has a natural tendency in both directions. So its good will be fellowship with that which is akin to it, and its evil fellowship with its opposites.

There is another instance in the passage VI.9.9.21-27, already partly quoted above, but with an obvious ambiguity as to what "there (*ekei*)" refers to, whether it is Intellect or even the One:

> […] and this is the soul's origin and end (*archê kai telos*); its beginning because it comes from thence (*ekeithen*), and its end because its Good is there. And when it comes to be there (*ekei*) it becomes itself and what it was (*hoper ên*); […]. For since the soul is other (*heteron*) than God but comes from Him it is necessarily in love with Him […].

The conclusion is clear though, for since the end is the Good, fully described later in the same treatise as obtained, and the end is the same as the origin (cf. V.8.7.44-47, VI.7.1.21-22), the Good or the One must be the direct origin of the particular soul.[185] Just like becoming Soul or Intellect, becoming the

185. Cf. Trouillard (1949) 355 and Trouillard (1961) 433: "Toute l'orientation de la philosophie plotinienne nous oblige à croire que l'état mystique n'est pas seulement devant nous, mais derrière nous, qu'il n'est pas seulement la fin, mais l'origine de toute la vie de l'esprit et de l'âme."

One then is really a reunification of the particular soul.[186] Plotinus makes a comparison with the knowledge or science within Intellect when he fixes the order of priority of man's unifications with the three original natures while referring to grasping the One within (III.9.2, cf. *Republic* 511b, 611e):

> Just as one science which is a whole is not scattered or broken into pieces by the division into the single subjects of study, but each of these contains potentially the whole, which has the same origin and goal (*archê kai telos*); in the same way, too, a man must prepare himself so that the principles (*archas*) in him are also his goals, and each as a whole and all together are directed to the best (*ariston*) of his nature; when he has become this, he is there; for with this best of him, when he has it, he will grasp (*hapsetai*) that.

Likewise, irrespective of the precise causal or temporal order, in IV.3.12.1-5 it is surely indicated that the human souls in their origin (*archê*), in their "being urged to be generated from above (*egenonto anôthen hormêtheisai*)", do not have Intellect as their unmixed origin, "since they did not descend with Intellect, but went on ahead (*ephthasan*) of it down to earth, but their heads are firmly set above heaven (*hûperanô tou ouranou*)." Taken in a metaphysical sense, "above heaven" could just be Intellect, cf. *Phaedrus* (248a), but that would collide with the information that soul has an origin independent of Intellect and its pattern of Forms. "Above heaven" will then be in the One, cf. *Republic* (592b).

It is acknowledged as a general rule that the origin is, for all things, the goal. Most things, however, must comfort themselves with contemplating it (III.8.7.15-18), whereas the human soul can actually attain it within itself (I.4.6.10-19). In II.3.15.13-22, Plotinus says about man's ability for ascent:

> Of men some are born belonging to the powers that come from the whole and to external circumstances, as if under an enchantment, and are in few things or nothing themselves. Others master these powers and circumstances and rise above them, so to speak, by their heads, towards the upper world and beyond Soul, and so preserve the best and ancient part of the soul's Substance (*ousias*). For we must not think of the soul as of such a kind that the nature which it has is just whatever affection it receives from outside, and that alone of all

186. Cf. Blakeley (1992) 66 criticising Rist (1989): "Although he must admit the unity claims, priority is given by Rist to difference. But does Plotinus advocate or concede such a priority?"

things it has no nature of its own; but it, far before anything else, since it has the status of a principle (*archês*), must have many powers of its own (*oikeias*) for its natural actualisations.

Elsewhere, it is said that the Good is part of the soul's Substance (I.8.12.5-7). The origin in the One of "the One within" will then be what Plotinus ultimately refers to when he speaks about "the original nature (*hê archaia phûsis*)" within the soul, cf. *Symposium* (192e), *Timaeus* (90d), and especially when he says that it comes from an origin like that which is itself (VI.9.6.20, cf. VI.5.1.16-19) and being its defining centre (VI.9.8.4-22), is its Self.[187]

Principally, Plotinus interprets what is said in the *Phaedo* (100b) on the quest for the ultimate cause and reason for everything (*tên aitian*) that will render the soul immortal. His interpretation is connected with a subtle reading of the decisively important, latest stage of the *Republic* (611a-612a), where the previously almost defining tripartition of the particular soul into discursive reason (*logismos*), temper and desires (435b-442d) – or into the inner "man", the inner "lion" and the inner "many-headed beast" (588b-590d) – is presented as essentially only an effect of the soul's particularisation including, most pertinently in the *Republic*, its embodiment:

Socrates: […] nor must we think that the soul in its truest nature (*alêthestatêi phûsei*) is full of multicoloured variety and unlikeness (*anomoiotêtos*) or differentiations (*diaphoras*) with itself.
Glaucon: What do you mean?
Socrates: It isn't easy for anything composed of many parts to be immortal if it isn't put together in the finest way, yet this is how the soul now appeared to us.

[…] But to see the soul as it is in truth, we must not study it as it is while it is maimed by its association with the body and other evils – which is what we were doing earlier – but as it is in its pure state, that's how we should explore the soul, sufficiently (*hikanôs*) by means of logical reasoning (*logismôi*).

We'll then find that it is a much finer thing than we thought and that we can see justice and injustice as well as all the other things we've discussed far more clearly.

187. II.3.8.14 and II.3.15.17 refer to the original nature of soul as possibly comprising both Intellect and the One, i.e. the hypostases prior to Soul, cf. Schicker (1991) 120 (who p. 118 by a typist's error refers to the non-existent line "III.3.8.14"). "The original nature" in I.8.7.6-7, however, is considered to be matter, cf. "the ancient nature" in *Statesman* 273b.

> What we've said about the soul is true of it as it appears at present. But the condition in which we've studied it is like that of the merman Glaucus (*ton thalattion Glaukon*), whose original nature (*tên archaian phûsin*) can't easily be made out by those who catch glimpses of him. Some of the original parts have been broken off, others have been crushed, and his whole body has been maimed by the waves and by the shells, seaweeds, and stones that have attached themselves to him, so that he looks more like a beast (*thêriôi*) than his original nature (*hoios ên phûsei*). The soul, too, is in a similar condition when we study it, beset by many evils. That, Glaucon, is why we have to look somewhere else in order to discover its true nature.
>
> Glaucon: To where?
>
> Socrates: To the philosophy of itself (*autês*), and we must realise what it grasps (*haptetai*) and longs to have intercourse with (*homiliôn*), because it is akin (*sûnggenês*) to the divine and immortal and what always is, and we must realise what it would become if it completely (*pasa*) followed this longing, and if the resulting effort lifted it out of the sea (*pontou*) in which it now dwells, and if the many stones and shells (those which have grown all over it in a wild, earthy, and stony profusion because it feasts at those so-called happy feastings on earth) were knocked off it all around. Then we'd see what its true nature (*tên alêtheian phûsin*) is and be able to determine whether it has many parts or is only one (*eite polûeidês eite monoeidês*) and whether or in what manner it is put together. But we've already given a decent account, I think, of what its condition is and what parts it has when it is immersed in human life.

Logically, it is here suggested to Plotinus (as explicitly referred to in I.1.12.6-23) that the pure soul once was without any differentiations and was absolutely partless, "one, completely simple (*hen haploun pantê*)", not just "like", but in fact identical with, the One (cf. V.3.10.31-33, VI.9.5.38-41). As we have seen above, Plotinus renders a close parallel to the true nature of soul as a demigod with a fishtail rising from the seas, mentioned by Plato here in his reference to the One as the sun "rising from Ocean (*ex ôkeanou*)" (V.5.8.6, cf., e.g., *Iliad* VII.421-23).

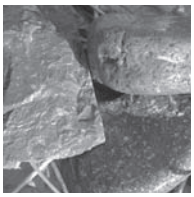
Plotinus agrees with the Platonic Socrates of this passage that the particularisations of the human soul drag it down to the level of the "many-headed beast" within (cf. II.9.2.4-12). The "inner man", on the other hand, regardless whether this is understood as the faculty of logical reasoning, the Form of the particular man or his particular intellect, is the link that connects the human soul to its original nature, the One – a nature that we could attain once again.

The One is also the ultimate reference point when Plotinus, with a slight variation on the wording from another passage in the *Republic* (547b), announces that (IV.7.9.28-29):

> the soul recovers its "ancient thorough Stillness (*archaian katastasin*)" when it runs up to its own (*epi ta hautou anadramon*).

Remarkably, this is not the Form of Stillness (*stasis*) but instead a state of thorough Stillness (*katastasis*) or ecstasy (*ekstasis*) at the highest level (cf. VI.9.11.9-16 & 23, V.1.2.14), equal to the One's immobility (*akinêsia*, e.g., V.1.6.25). Virtues of Intellect like wisdom are acquired by the soul as its own possessions (*oikeia onta*) on its way up to its Self (*hotan eph' heautên anelthêi*, IV.7.10.14) in the One.

Part II



FREEDOM

Chapter II.A

Sufficient reason behind causes

At this point the soul has reached the One. Could the One on its own give any reason as to why human selves are different from each other and how their differences occur? Could it be a matter of freedom and self-determination? In any case, to grasp the concerns of Plotinus' philosophy, we must identify the logic that drives it and anything derived from the One, including particular human souls. To understand his philosophy, we must start from the assumption that it is logical enough to deserve the name of philosophy.

Fortunately, this appears to be the case. The highly significant Principle of Sufficient Reason is in use throughout, both implicitly and explicitly. Explicitly, it is expressed with forms of either of the two words *hikanos* ("sufficient") and *autarkês* (literally "self-governing" or "independent"). Plotinus is on a quest for sufficient arguments to show the order of things (III.2.1.1-5, III.5.7.9-12, III.6.3.27, III.7.1.7-13, IV.3.1.18-21, IV.4.21.14-18, IV.5.8.15-17, IV.7.8[3].23-25, VI.1.1.4-14, VI.1.28.23-26, cf. II.3.13.1-3). The logic of our philosophy must not be self-complacent (*ou to authades metadiôkousa*) and does not have to be bold in the way aspects of that reality unveiled by our philosophy certainly will appear to be.[188] The logic of our arguments must just have sufficient valiancy (*to tharraleon […] echousa*) to grasp truth validly. The simplicity and exact sufficiency of those arguments turn out to correspond closely to the simplicity and sufficiency or independence of things (V.8.6.15-18, cf. III.3.3.17-18, II.9.14.36-44). The logical order and the henological order are one and the same. The

188. Cf. section 'I.C.5. Unity or plurality first?' above.

One, for instance, is not only the most independent and sufficient foundation of all things (V.3.13.16-21, V.4.1.10-13, VI.9.6.15-18); it is, simply and exclusively, absolutely independent and sufficient to itself (I.1.2.22-23, I.8.2.4-5, I.8.3.14-15, II.9.1.8-9, IV.4.18.21-22, V.2.1.1-9, V.3.10.50-51, V.3.12.28-42, V.3.13.16-21, V.3.16.30-31, V.3.17.10-14, V.5.4.6-7, V.5.5.1-7, V.5.9.23, V.6.2.15-16, V.6.3, V.6.4.20-22, VI.1.26.36-37, VI.4.10.22-24, VI.7.23.7-8, VI.7.37.29-31, VI.7.38.22-24, VI.8.7.42-46, VI.8.8.12-27, VI.8.15.26-28, VI.9.6.24-26 & 45). This is so because unity and, consequently, simplicity (I.1.2.22-23, VI.7.13.1-3, V.3.11.2-3 & 27-28, V.3.16.7-8) are the measure of sufficiency and independence (VI.9.6.16-17, cf. V.3.15.10-18), for (IV.4.18.21-22):

> […] when something is one, it is independent to itself, so to speak (*hoion*).

Plotinus simply interprets what is said in the *Phaedo* (101b-102a), *Republic* (423d-e), *Philebus* (20b-21a, 52d, 60b-c) and *Second Letter* (312e-313a) on the quest for ultimate self-sufficiency of "the unconditional origin of everything (*tou anûpothetou epi tên tou pantos archên*)" (*Republic* 511b, cf. 510b). Since everything and anything particular must be one somehow (cf. *Parmenides* hypothesis II, 144c), it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that unconditional self-sufficiency must consist in pure, partless Unity. Plotinus identifies it with the One from hypothesis I of the *Parmenides*.

According to Plotinus, there can only be one single, absolutely self-sufficient One, "for if there were another of this kind, both would be one" (V.4.1.15-16). The Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles and, inversely, the Principle of the Non-Identity of Discernibles employed are just logical consequences of the Principle of Sufficient Reason.[189] For if there is no sufficient reason for

189. Cf. these principles as applied in, e.g., section 'I.B.3. Forms of particulars within Intellect' above, as distinct from the interpretation of V.4.1.15-16 by Gerson (1994a) 5: "Presumably, this means 'specifically one,' since it would be nonsense to claim that there cannot be numerically two things because then they would be numerically one. But what is wrong with saying that two things are specifically one, differing *solo numero*? We must not suppose a sort of Leibnizian reply from Plotinus based on the principle of the identity of indiscernibles for the obvious reason that Plotinus is talking about the uniqueness of the absolutely simple first principle of all, not the uniqueness or identity of any individual, which of course may be complex."

Gerson makes the mistake of considering logical principles nonsense or irrelevant to Plotinus; principles according to which "a complex individual" is strictly a contradiction in terms, cf. notes 31 and 171 above and (next) note 190 below.

two things being different, they must be the same, while if there is, they must be different.[190]

Although the designations "the Principle of Sufficient Reason", "the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles" and "the Principle of the Non-Identity of Discernibles" later effectively became the coinage of Leibniz,[191] the first principle has been employed from the very beginning of Western philosophy from Anaximander onwards, the second from Parmenides onwards (e.g., DK 28B8.25),[192] and the third from at least Plato onwards. Plotinus' philosophy bears heavy evidence of all three logical principles at work.[193] Plotinus takes the Principle of the Non-Identity of Discernibles (e.g., VI.2.10.40-42) from Plato's *Parmenides* (143b), while both the Principle of the Non-Identity of Discernibles and the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles are clearly expressed a little later in the same hypothesis II (146b):

> […] for everything is either the same as or different from anything else.

Plato made the same point about the difference between Being and Unity in his *Sophist* (244b-245b).

Plotinus for his part argues with the Principle of Sufficient Reason, positing that since the One is ultimately self-sufficient, all other things that arise from it cannot be completely accidental and coincidental either (III.2.1.1-5).

190. Leibniz (1689) 1645 similarly develops the Principle of the Non-Identity of Discernibles from the Principle of Sufficient Reason. He simply writes: "It follows (*Sequitur*)" from that, i.e. "It follows also that there cannot be two singular things in nature which are different only numerically (*Sequitur etiam hinc non dari posse in natura duas res singulares solo numero differentes*)." According to Leibniz (1689) 1645-46, the Principle of *In-Esse* correspondingly follows from the Principle of the Non-Identity of Discernibles, i.e. "It follows also that there are no extrinsic denominations, which have no foundation at all in the denominated thing itself (*Sequitur etiam nullas dari denominationes pure extrinsecas, quae nullum prorsus habeant fundamentum in ipsa re denominata*)."
191. The Principle of Sufficient Reason, of which Schopenhauer (1847) delivers an influential critical presentation, calling Plato's conception thereof naïve (II, § 6) and emphatically stressing an opposition of reasons and causes, is also presented in, e.g., Leibniz (1714) § 32, while the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles is found ibid. §§ 9-10, cf. note 189 above.
192. Cf. McKirahan (1994) 40, 167.
193. Leibniz (1689) 1645: "Because they are too easy, these issues have not been satisfactorily considered, though from them follow many things of great importance […] (*Ex his propter nimiam facilitatem suam non satis consideratis multa consequuntur magni momenti […]*)." Cf. Ousager (2003).

The difference is that they are not absolutely self-sufficient as is the One, cf. *Republic* (438a-b), *Sophist* (255c) and the *Philebus* (53d):

> Suppose there are two kinds of things, one kind itself on its own (*to auto kath' hauto*), the other in need of something else.

Just like the self-sufficient Good in Plato's *Philebus* (20b-21a, 60b-c), the One in Plotinus is the self-sufficient reason for everything else (cf. VI.8.14.29-31). Consequently, any causal relation has its background in a sufficient logical relation to the One (cf. VI.8.8.12-15).[194]

II.A.1. Reason and cause in Plato and Plotinus

There is evidence that Plotinus' conception of any causes as subordinate to sufficient reasons was developed systematically from Plato.

To indicate the difference and yet close connection between cause and logical reason, Plotinus exploits the appearance of the two words *aition* and *aitia* in Plato. In English they have both traditionally been translated indiscriminately as "cause". Etymologically, *aitia* as well as *aition* have forensic overtones, referring to conscious or self-aware "responsibility", "guilt", "intent", or "reason", in contrast to, for instance, the word *archê*, which simply means "origin", "beginning", "principle" or "cause" without any necessary reference to anything being conscious or self-aware. An *aition*, however, is less intentional than is an *aitia*, since in Plato the feminine personalisation of the neuter *aition* into the word *aitia* is reserved for the most deliberate matters (cf. *Timaeus* 29d, 33a, 38d, 40b, 44c, 47b). Thus, it is unlikely that it is merely a coincidence when in the *Philebus* (30c), Plato in passing calls Intellect *aitia* and not just *aition* or *archê*, for Intellect is first and foremost conscious and thinking. While *archê*, *aition* and *aitia* can all be translated approximately as "cause", since all of them will have impact as causes, it is most appropriate in Plato, in Platonism and Neoplatonism alike always to translate *aitia* as "reason".[195]

194. Cf. Leibniz (1689) 1645: "That nothing is without a reason, or that no effect is without a cause (*nihil esse sine ratione, seu nullum effectum esse absque causa*)."
195. Cf. Ledbetter (1999) 255-56: "Where Plato gives these terms different meanings, I shall argue that he distinguishes not between propositional and non-propositional items, as Frede proposes, but between reasons and causes." Ledbetter is referring to Frede (1980). A precursor of Frede's view is Vlastos (1969), especially pp. 306-07.

According to Plotinus, there is a sufficient reason to be found behind all causes and effects that appear. The doctrine clearly has its background in Plato. In the *Philebus* (26e), for instance, we find Socrates' statement:

> It is necessary that everything has become what it is because of some reason (*dia tina aitian gignesthai*).

Everything called a creative principle or a reason (*aitia*) will also be a cause (*aition*), and in this way the cause is subordinated to the reason (26e):

> Socrates: And is it not the case that there is no difference between the nature of what makes (*hê tou poiountos phûsis*) and the reason (*tês aitias*), except in name, so that the maker (*to de poioun*) and the cause (*to aition*) would rightly be called one (*hen*)?
> Protarchus: Right.

Inversely, however, to declare something to be a cause (*aition*) is *not* the same as saying it is itself a reason (*aitia*), and even less so the self-sufficient reason itself. Between superordinate and subordinate there is no mutual implication, but only a "vertical" relation, which Plotinus made into his clear-cut Principle of Vertical Causation. For, as it is said (27a):

> […] it is something other and not the same to be the reason (*aitia*) and what is subservient (*to douleuon*) to the reason (*aitiai*) for becoming (*eis genesin*).

On the one hand, the Good is a cause of everything, since, according to the simile of the sun in the *Republic* (509b), Being and Substance are "thrown in (*proseinai*)" solely because of the Good (*hûp' ekeinou*). On the other hand, in a narrow sense of reason, the Good (379b) and, similarly, the Form of the Good (517b-c) can only be a reason (*aitia*) for what is good but not for what is bad. This is why we have responsibility (*aitia*) for our wrong choices, while God, considered as the Good, could not be responsible (*anaitios*, 617e), cf. *Timaeus* (42e).[196]

A wider sense of *aitia* as "reason", however, is remarkably clear in the passage in the *Timaeus* (48a), where we find the dimmest version of reason, "the

196. As distinct from Graeser (2002) 359, who thinks that the Good in the simile of the sun could only be a cause of what is right and beautiful, i.e. good (cf. *Second Letter* 312e). The fact that he translates *aitia* as "Ursache" provides insight into his view.

Form of the reason led astray (*to tês planômenês eidos aitias*)". This passage notably presents the modal necessity associated precisely with the dim Form of space (49a, 52a-b). We should infer that this, the lowest reason, could only be led astray by a reason of higher range, of higher modal necessity (cf. the interpretation by Plotinus in III.2.2.33-36).

As in the *Timaeus* (48a), in the *Philebus* (22d), even when it is itself called a reason (30c), Intellect is also presented as the cause (*aition*) derived from that reason in itself, for (30d-e) "Intellect is kindred (*genous*) with what is called the cause (*aitiou*) of everything." In the same passage, Intellect is called "highly sufficient (*mala hikanôs*)", i.e. a relatively sufficient reason, when not completely self-sufficient itself (cf. 20b).[197] Intellect is (31a) "akin (*sûnggenês*)" to "the reason (*aitias*)". If we continue to distinguish between *aitia* and *aition*, this suggests that the absolutely self-sufficient reason is something other than Intellect, although Intellect is considered the truly divine Intellect and not just a particular, personal intellect (cf. 22c). Another suggestion is made referring to the Good as sufficient to itself (20d, cf. 20e-21a, 60b-c):

> Socrates: What then? Is the Good sufficient (*hikanon*)?
> Protarchus: How wouldn't it be? And in this it certainly differs from all beings (*pantôn […] tôn ontôn*).

This deepens our understanding of the Good as presented in the simile of the sun, since now the difference between Being and the Good is explicitly expressed as a matter of degree as to modal necessity. The Good is suggested to be the One (15a), since both are assigned the absolute modal necessity (cf. 63b), and a higher modal necessity than that assigned to Being or beings.

Likewise, the *Phaedo* (99b) alludes to "the cause of Being (*to aition tôi onti*)", which is probably rightly also to be reckoned the reason for Being and for any generation and destruction, since it is equated with the Good as (95e, 98a-b) "the reason (*tên aitian*)" behind all causes, "without which", in its truest sense, "the cause would not be a cause (*aneu hou to aition ouk an pot' eiê aition*)."

197. A sufficient reason is not at all the same as a "sufficient condition", since a "condition" would be a state of affairs in the sensible world. Plotinus as well as Plato denounce the notion of such affairs as having no other causal effect than just being *necessary* conditions for sufficient reasons of an order other than the sensible to be effected. Necessary conditions would themselves be effects of sufficient reasons, confirming but also adding to Sedley (1998) 121: "[…] Platonic causes are not straightforwardly identifiable with either necessary or sufficient conditions."

In conclusion, Plato clearly distinguishes between "reason (*aitia*)" and "cause (*aition*)", since there must always be a sufficient reason for a cause to be a cause, i.e. to be efficient as a cause, while the inverse – "a sufficient cause for a reason to be a reason" – would not make sense.[198] The sense of "reason (*aitia*)" is all-important in Plato.

Correspondingly, in Plotinus, the very sense (*hôrismenon ti*) of the One as single, unique or alone (*monachon*), is pivotal (VI.8.9.9-13). In an early passage (III.1[3].1.8-9) Plotinus states that the Forms cannot possibly refer to another reason (*eis alla aitia*), but we have already seen in a quotation above that he soon corrects this, calling the One the reason (*aitian*) of Intellect and with it all its Forms (V.1[10].11.7, cf. VI.8.14.29-31). For, according to his paraphrase of the Law of Causation in the *Timaeus* (28a, 28c), everything will have a reason (*aitia*, not just *aition* as in the *Timaeus*) for coming to be (III.1.1.1-3 & 13-15), and Plotinus considers even Forms as having come to be from the One (e.g., VI.9[9].1.1-2, V.1[10].6.19-22, VI.7[38].19.19). In this way, he overtly subordinates the Law of Causation to the Principle of Sufficient Reason, i.e. ultimately to the self-sufficient One. The distinction between reason and cause is essential in Plotinus when it comes to the respective roles of self-causation and ultimate freedom in his philosophy.

II.A.2. *Causa sui* or *ratio sui*?

As Schopenhauer and Derek Parfit among others have argued, it makes little sense to refer to a principle like the One as its own cause, *causa sui*, since this leads to an infinite regress.[199] I will demonstrate that Plotinus did not commit this error but that he inevitably referred to it while arguing against it.

The notion of self-causation does not appear for the first time in Plotinus. References to species of self-causation such as self-creation, self-generation and self-production, for instance, were not unusual in religious and philo-

198. While Sedley (1998) 115-17 points to the logical or, in his terms 'quasi-logical' meaning of both the words *aition* and *aitia* in Plato, he does not seem to distinguish sufficiently between them.

199. Cf. Schopenhauer (1847) II § 8, Parfit (1998) 26. Schopenhauer calls the notion a contradiction in terms and quite amusingly compares it with the story of Baron Munchausen pulling himself including his horse up the morass by his own pigtail.

sophical contexts from the fifth century BCE onwards.[200] Self-causation of the supreme principle was taken for granted by the Neopythagoreans, as reported, for instance, by Hippolytus in his *Refutation of all Heresies* IV.43.4-5, VI.17.3,[201] who uses the expressions "self-creating (*hautên gennôsa*)", "its own mother (*hautês mêtêr*)" and "its own father (*hautês patêr*)" for the one (*hen*) single Monad and as employed openly by the anonymous Neopythagorean *Theology of Arithmetic* 2.16-17 and 3.17-18[202] – which Plotinus probably knew, cf. V.1.1.4.[203] The Neoplatonist Plotinus would prefer to discuss the sharper Neopythagorean conception of an absolute self-generating pure Unity (cf. the judgement of Longinus in *VP* 20.71-73) to more chaotic hierarchies of, e.g., Gnostic conceived self-generations.[204] The notion of self-causation of the absolute was handed down to Latin Medieval scholars through Marius Victorinus' Latin translations of Plotinus. He probably used *causa* as a translation of both the Greek words *aitia* and *aition*, and in his own writings he came upon the expression *causa sibi* for the supreme principle. The expression was in some measure taken over as *causa sui* by Augustine, Aquinas, Ficino in his Renaissance Latin translation of Plotinus, and Descartes, but most substantially by Spinoza.[205] The *causa sui*, however, is explicitly denied in the model for Plotinus, presumably Plato's own *Greater Hippias* (297a), where Socrates says:

> But the cause is different from what it's a cause of. I don't suppose the cause would be a cause of itself (*to ge aition aitiou aition an eiê*).

By contrast, while describing the first actuality in the *Metaphysics* (1072a15) Aristotle touches upon the notion of a *causa sui*:

> Therefore that again must be a cause both of itself and of that other (*palin gar ekeino hautôi te aition kakeinôi*).

200. Cf. Whittaker (1975) 194-216 and Whittaker (1980) 186-87, 189-90 as distinct from Hadot (1971) 976, Leroux (1990) 206 and Narbonne (1993) 189.
201. Armstrong (1982) 403 suggests instead Hippolytus' own Christian writings as the occasion for Plotinus' writing VI.8.
202. Cf. Krämer (1964) 254, 348, 399-402. Iamblichus is not the author, as was believed until fairly recently.
203. Cf. *index fontium* in the 1983 *editio minor*.
204. Partly as distinct from, while partly confirming Whittaker (1980) 177-78, 184, 190-91.
205. Cf. Beierwaltes (1999), who delivers more detail than Hadot (1971) in his very brief survey. Whittaker (1975) 214, for his part, acquits Augustine of adhering to the notion as pertaining to the absolute principle. Augustine's *On the Immortality of the Soul* VIII.14, however, is ambiguous, cf. note 211 below.

However, in context, Aristotle's suggestion might be just hypothetical. In any case, Plotinus would rather agree with Aristotle's clearer iteration of Plato's point in *On the Movement of Animals* (700a35-700b3):

> […] nor can anything possibly be the cause of its own generation and decay (*auto aition einai hautôi ouden*); for the mover must exist before the moved, the begetter before the begotten, and nothing is prior to itself (*auto d'hautou proteron ouden estin*).

For in V.6.3.15-16 and VI.8.20.1-4 & 15-17, Plotinus explicitly refers with approval to this point shared by Plato and Aristotle, as I will further argue below.[206]

In contrast, it makes perfect sense to say that something is its very own reason, *ratio sui*, without causing any further regress. Plotinus did exactly that concerning the One, inspired indirectly, perhaps, by the role of the "self-sufficient reason (*aitia autotelês*)" in Stoicism (cf. Plutarch *On Self-Contradictions of the Stoics* 1056b)[207] in addition to the direct source in Plato. In passing (V.8.7.45-46), he refers to Aristotle's argument from the *Physics* (188a27-30) against a regress of principles or origins (*archas*), but reformulates the argument as a refutation of a regress of reasons (*aitias*). According to Plotinus, the ultimate reason and the ultimate principle, origin or cause must coincide. The One is its own reason because pure Unity is evidently, if not self-evidently for anyone who has not attained the One, self-sufficient. In this context, we must basically take the various evidence and arguments he gives for that self-sufficiency for granted.

A hundred years after the Latin writer Marius Victorinus, the Greek philosopher Proclus in *The Elements of Theology* 40 & 46 and his *Commentary on the* Parmenides 1146 still uses the term *aitia* rather than the word *aition* for the considered self-constituted origin of everything, though obviously not consistently, as I will argue Plotinus does. Proclus denies self-constitution of the One but does not elicit the reason why the One, and strictly speaking, everything else as well, cannot be self-constituted. A sort of precursor to Proclus' expressions of the One's hypothetical self-constitution is found in Plotinus, VI.8.13.55-59:[208]

206. Cf. chapter 'II.C. Determinism disrupted'.
207. Cf. and at the same time as distinct from Graeser (1972) 117-18, for Graeser is not perfectly right to say that Plotinus challenges the Stoic notion, when he in fact affirms its Platonic model.
208. Cf. Dillon (1987) 502 n. 8.

> For if His will (*boulêsis*) comes from Himself and is something like His own work (*hoion ergon*), and this will is the same thing as His existence, then in this way He will have brought Himself into existence (*autos an houtôs hûpostêsas an eiê hauton*); so that He is not what He happened to be but what He Himself willed.

And in VI.8.16.22-39:

> […] and His willing is not random nor as it happened; for since it is willing of the best it is not random. But that an inclination (*neusis*) of this kind to Himself, being in a kind of way His actuality (*hoion energeia*) and abiding in Himself, makes Him be what He is, is evident if one posits the opposite; because, if He inclined to what is outside Him, He would put an end to His being what He is; so then His being (*to ara einai*) what He is is His self-directed actuality; but these are one thing and Himself. He therefore brought Himself into existence (*hûpestêsen hauton*), since His actuality was brought out into existence along with Himself. If then He did not come into being (*gegonen*), but His actuality was always and something like being awake, when the wakener was not someone else, a wakefulness and a thought transcending thought (*hûpernoêsis*) always existing (*aei ousa*), then He is as he woke Himself to be. But His waking transcends Substance and Intellect and intelligent life; but these are Himself. He then is an actuality above Intellect and thought and life; but these are from Him and not from another. His being (*to einai*) then comes by and from Himself. He is not therefore as He happened to be, but He is Himself as He willed.

Or in VI.8.20.19-23:

> For indeed, if He was kept in being by another, He would not be first Self from Himself; but if He is rightly said to hold Himself together, He is both Himself and the bringer of Himself into being (*paragôn heauton*), granted that what He by His nature holds together is what from the beginning He has made to be.

In all the three cases above, Plotinus is obviously not describing straight away what the One is like, but only the consequences of hypothetical suggestions, which on their own point back to what is to become Plotinus' solution: the identification of will and modal necessity in the One. In the last quotation, Plotinus argues against the hypothetical suggestions that, on the one hand, the One should be determined by something else and on the other, that it should

be determined by itself.[209] The latter suggestion would correspond to the One as a *causa sui*. Both suggestions are false and even impossible, since the One, unlike anything else, is simply itself alone, as is stated in the very conclusion of treatise VI.8 (VI.8.21.30-33):

> […] but It is something which has Its place high above everything, this which alone is free in truth (*alêtheiai eleutheron*), because It is not enslaved to Itself, but is only Itself and really Itself, while every other thing is itself and something else.

He is concerned about the same issue in a passage midway in the treatise, in VI.8.10.18-26:

> If then there is nothing before Him, but He is the first, one must stop here and say nothing more about Him, but enquire how the things after Him came to be, but not how this did, because it really did not come to be (*hoti ontôs touto mê egeneto*). Well then, suppose He did not come to be, but is as He is and is not master of His own Substance (*esti de hoios estin, ouk ôn tês hautou ousias kûrios*)? And if He is not master of His Substance, but is who He is, as He did not bring Himself into existence but manages with Himself as He is, then He is what He is of necessity, and could not be otherwise. Now He is not as He is because He cannot be otherwise, but because being what He is is the best.

Plotinus raises the issue (VI.8.10.37-VI.8.11.1):

> How then could that which is before existence have come to existence either by another's agency or by its own? But what is this which did not come to existence?

The answer is evidently that the One has not come into existence but is even beyond eternity in its ordinary sense (VI.8.20.23-27).[210]

209. An issue which will be further elaborated in chapter 'II.C. Determinism disrupted' below.

210. As distinct from Narbonne (1993) 189-90, although he similarly qualifies the role of the *causa sui* in Plotinus as just a way of speaking for purposes of pedagogical persuasion, cf. VI.8.13.4-5, according to Narbonne meant only hypothetically, as if the One had freedom to choose itself. For that is obviously not the case with the use of *aition heautou* in VI.8.14.41. As a consequence, he cannot acquit Plotinus completely of adherence to the notion of a *causa sui* as I do. Cf. further discussion in chapter 'II.C. Determinism disrupted' below.

So Plotinus argues against any self-causation of the supreme principle of the kind that was held by Neopythagoreans and perhaps also by some Jews, Gnostics or Christians of the time.[211] An argument against self-causation might already have been produced by both Numenius and Ammonius Saccas, as John Whittaker suggests,[212] and though Plotinus occasionally had been accused of essentially plagiarising Numenius (*VP* 17.1-18.3), and Ammonius Saccas had been his teacher in Alexandria (*VP* 3.7-21), it is unlikely that any of the former ever put forward as thorough a version of the argument as did Plotinus. It is true that Plotinus says in one single passage, where he does not appear to argue against any other possible suggestions of the character of the supreme principle, but only for his own conception, that the One is *aition heautou* (VI.8.14.41), apparently "cause of Himself". This was what Marius Victorinus had translated as *causa sibi*. However, this is not the substantive *aition*, but instead an adjective, appositely modifying *to prôton*, meaning both "causing" and "giving reason for", i.e. an adjectival form of both *aitia* and *aition* at once. To render the rest of Plotinus' work coherent, *aitia* rather than *aition* is probably hinted at here. Instead of "cause of Himself", the expression must mean "giving reason for Himself".[213] For in context, Plotinus holds this view of the origin of everything (VI.8.14.29-42):

211. The Gnostics are suggested by Whittaker (1980), while the Christians are suggested by Armstrong (1982). Whittaker (1975) 210-11 and Whittaker (1980) 179 present a powerful argument from Noetus of Smyrna for the heresy of Monarchianism as a reason why self-generation cannot be in accordance with orthodox Trinitarian Christianity: if God generated Himself, He could be both Father and Son to Himself, i.e. Father and Son would become indiscernibly identical.
212. Cf. Whittaker (1975) 199-200.
213. As distinct from Richter (1867a) 42, Trouillard (1961) 438, Krämer (1964) 401, Rist (1967) 81, Hadot (1971) 976, Trouillard (1974) 9, Whittaker (1975) 193-94, 215-16, Whittaker (1980) 177-78, 184, 190-91, Armstrong's 1988 translation and his synopsis p. 225, Beierwaltes (1990) xxxi, Leroux (1990) 203, 206, Narbonne (1993) 181-82, 189, Gerson (1994a) 32, Weismann (1997) 1173-74, Parfit (1998) 26, Beierwaltes (1999) and Beierwaltes (2001b) 178-80, who all call the One its own cause. Rist (1967) 81 tries to avoid the implied infinite regress by saying that the One "*is* his own cause" instead of saying that "the One *causes* himself". What I suggest Rist lacks in this attempt is the sense implied by *aitia*, i.e. 'reason'. Beierwaltes (1999) is a bit ambiguous, for while the title of his article is '*Causa sui*. Plotins Begriff des Einen als Ursprung des Gedankens der Selbstursächlichkeit' and he continues to use these terms (pp. 196, 214), he seems to be aware that there is another possible understanding of *aition heautou* in Plotinus as (p. 191) "Grund seiner selbst" [also in Beierwaltes (2001b) 179], "Selbst-(Be-)Gründung", (p. 215) "*gründet* er in-different vom Gegründeten: *sich selbst*", "absolute Selbst-Gründung" – because (pp. 192, 216) he is aware that Plotinus has some reservations concerning the notion in the discussion of VI.8. He does not make it clear, however, how far these reservations might reach and what the sense of the reservations and the *aition heautou* really could be instead. Cf. also Müller (1914) 486 rightly referring to the One as "der Grund des Grundes".

> But these came in this way from a single source which did not reason but gave the reason why (*to dia ti*) and the Being together as a whole. It is the source therefore of Being and the why of Being, giving both at once; but that from which these come is like the things which have come to be much more originally and more truly and more than as it is on their level in that it is better.
>
> If then there is nothing random or by chance and no 'it happened to be like this' with the things which have their reason in themselves (*tas aitias en hautois echei*), and all things which come from Him do have it, for He is the Father of formative principle and the reason and causative Substance (*logou ôn kai aitias kai ousias aitiôdous patêr*), which are certainly all far from chance, He would be the origin (*archê*) and in a way the exemplar (*paradeigma*) of all things which have no part in chance, the Real (*to ontôs*) and the Primary (*to prôton*), uncontaminated by chances and coincidences and happening, giving reason for Himself (*aition heautou*) and Himself from Himself and through Himself; for He is primarily Self and Self beyond Being.

With the expression "Father of […] the reason and causative Substance (*aitias kai ousias aitiôdous patêr*)" Plotinus refers (cf. V.1.8.4) to a similar expression in the Platonic *Sixth Letter* (323d), "Father of the cause (*aitiou patera*)". However, presumably determined to present the deep logical structure of the causal hierarchy, Plotinus fundamentally changes "the Father of the cause (*aition*)" to "the Father of the reason (*aitia*)", even when "the Father" – taken by Plotinus to be identical with the One – is actually Himself considered to be the very deepest self-sufficient reason.

This interpretation is coherent with other passages in Plotinus. When he refers to "the reason for Being (*tês aitias tou einai*) of the world order" in III.7.6.53, he does so in order to sharpen logically Aristotle's phrase of the bare "cause of Being (*aition tou einai*)" in the *Metaphysics* (1017b15, 1041b26, 1043b13, 1045a8 & 28, 1045b4-5 & 20), *Posterior Analytics* (90a9), *On the Soul* (415b12) and *Nicomachean Ethics* (1161a16-17, 1162a6-7, 1165a23).[214] Aristotle only varies the phrase twice in the *Metaphysics* (1043a2, 1045a11) with the phrase later used by Plotinus, "the reason for Being (*aitia tou einai*)".

We have already noticed how the One is called by Plotinus "the reason" for Intellect (V.1.11.7), and so, by implication, the reason for Being. The One is also referred to as "the reason" by a joint reference to the *Phaedrus* (246a-248e) and the simile of the sun from the *Republic* (508e) in VI.9.9.1-2:

214. Cf. the enumeration of the passages in Aristotle by Gerson (1991) 341 and Gerson (1994b) 18.

> And in this dance the soul sees the spring of Life, the spring of Intellect, the origin (*archê*) of Being, the reason for the Good (*agathou aitian*), the root of the Soul […].

In III.1.8.8, the ultimate reason of the One is transferred, with a reference to Plato's remark on the Soul as dealing with initiating movements (*prôtourgoi kinêseis*) in the *Laws* (897a), and also to the particular soul as "being a reason for initiating work (*prôtourgou aitias ousês*)", just as in II.1.4.7 & 30, the whole Soul is reckoned as the reason for Nature. Using an apparently Aristotelian terminology, Plotinus here refers to the reason manifesting itself in Soul as being the cause of change (*hê tês metabolês aitia*) of sensible things. In reality, this usage alludes to his Platonic view that substantial change like generation has its reason in Forms within Intellect only transferred by Soul and not generated by Soul. This pattern exhibits the logical structure of causal explanation in Plotinus.

As Plato in the *Philebus* (30c), Plotinus in VI.7.1.57-58 mentions Intellect as a reason, and even as "having its reason (*tên aitian*) also in itself". This could make the relation between Intellect and the One appear doubtful. However, Plotinus takes up and explains the same issue shortly afterwards, in VI.7.2.23-43:

> But Intellect in this way has each and every reason why (*to dia ti*) of the things in it; but it would itself be each of the things in it, so that none of them has come to be in need of a reason why, but it has come to be along with it and has in itself the reason for its existence (*en autôi tên tês hûpostaseôs aitian*). But since there is nothing casual in its coming to be it would not have any of its reason why (*dia ti*) left out but in having everything it has that of its reason (*tês aitias*) which makes it exist beautifully. So it also gives to the things which participate in it in such a way that they possess their reason why. And truly, just as in this All here below, which is composed of many things, all of them are linked to each other, and each particular reason why is contained in their being all – just as in each particular the part is seen relating to the whole – it is not that this comes to be, and then this after that, but they jointly establish the reason (*tên aitian*) and what is given reason (*kai to aitiaton*) together in relation to each other, so much more there in the intelligible must all things be each of them related to the whole and each to itself. If therefore there is a joint existence of all things together, of all things with nothing random about it, and there must be no separation, then the things given reason (*ta aitiata*) would have their reasons (*aitias*) in themselves, and each would be of such a

> kind as to possess its reason without any further reason (*hoion anaitiôs tên aitian echein*). If then the intelligibles do not possess the reason for their Being (*mê echei aitian tou einai*) but are independent (*autarkê*) and have become isolated from the reason (*memonômena aitias estin*), they would be in possession of their reason in themselves and with themselves (*en hautois echonta sûn hautois tên aitian*).

The point is, however, that the intelligibles do not have their reason wholly within themselves *as* themselves. For that is given to them by what also gives them their Being, the only self-sufficient reason, the One. The self-governance or independence (*autarkeia*) of Intellect is derived from and is in that sense actually dependent upon the One (V.3.17.10-14), for while the Unity of the One is absolute and does not depend upon any parts (II.9.1.9, V.3.15.15-16), the unity of Intellect is a whole that depends on its parts, the Forms or Beings (V.3.13.19-20, V.3.17.6-10), cf. hypothesis II of the *Parmenides* (142c-e, 144a). The Forms are said to be independent or self-sufficient only in their relation to the sensible world (V.9.11.21, V.9.5.45-46, III.2.14.10-11, VI.6.18.52-53), just like the sensible universe as such is also said to be independent in relation to any particular sensible things from within or from without itself (IV.8.2.14-16, III.2.3.3-9 & 21-22, III.5.5.7-9), cf. *Timaeus* (33d).

To conclude, the One in Plotinus is not a cause of itself, but instead a self-sufficient reason. It is giving reason for itself (*aition heautou*) – because it is the self-sufficient reason (*aitia*) for itself – without thereby causing any infinite regress. Only by not implying any self-causation of that kind could freedom ultimately be left any chance – as we are soon to explore further.[215]

II.A.3. Plotinus interpreting the *Euthyphro*

In treatise VI.8 Plotinus discusses the relationship between necessity and the will of the One. While Paul Henry thinks that the voluntarist traits in the treatise are a negligible exception confirming the main view of Plotinus elsewhere that emanation is necessary,[216] Trouillard and especially Rist see a breakaway in this treatise from what they perceive as Plotinus' earlier rationalism towards

215. Cf. chapter 'II.C. Determinism disrupted' below.
216. Henry (1931) 339.

irrational voluntarism; according to Rist plausibly inspired by some Christian writings.[217] Others have questioned this, among them Giovanni Reale and Laura Westra. Reale thinks that Plotinus is here only speaking about "a willed necessity" on behalf of the One.[218] It is not clear whether Reale thinks that the One according to Plotinus is subordinated to necessity, which – as we shall soon see – would be false, or whether he thinks that the One chooses to let necessity rule. The last opportunity would mean a large concession to Rist's interpretation, that however well-ordered the world might be, it actually all depends on completely irrational, arbitrary will alone, that "the One wills itself" incidentally rather than something else and that the necessity of the causal hierarchy has its origin in this will. For its will could only be irrational and arbitrary if not guided by some – sufficient – reason.

This interpretation presents a version of incompatibilism, the incompatibilism between freedom and necessity, as valid for the One of Plotinus, saying that freedom in the final analysis determines what is to count as necessity.[219] It would mean, however, that in the end Plotinus would restrict himself to the cosmological argument for the One as just a necessary causal precondition for the manifold, and would give up the henological argument, according to which the One is absolutely self-sufficient itself no matter which causal connections are established from it. As it preserves the predominant henological argument in Plotinus, Laura Westra's interpretation is more likely, namely that there is in fact simple identity between will and reason in the One (cf. VI.8.20.6-9).[220] We can leave the question of how Plotinus more precisely conceives this identity for the time being.[221]

If the One is conceived of as will only, however, it would not bring anything about in itself, for it would already be there (VI.8.21.10-19). This is remarkably another version of the argument against the One as hypothetically a *causa sui*. Corresponding to our previous discussions of the relationship between *aitia* and *aition* in Plato and Plotinus, I think the following passage from Plotinus strongly supports Westra's interpretation (VI.8.18.38-53):

217. Trouillard (1955a) 77, 79, Rist (1967) 66, 82-83 and especially Rist (1982) 99, 108, 111-12. Armstrong (1982) identifies "the bold suggestion" of God as necessarily self-determining mentioned in VI.8.7.11-15 as Christian. As noted in section 'II.A.2. *Causa sui* or *ratio sui*?' above, it could just as well be Neopythagorean.
218. Reale (1983) 162.
219. Cf. further discussion including another version of compatibilism in section 'II.C.3. Two concepts of necessity' below.
220. Westra (1990) 103, cf. Zeeman (1946) 207.
221. Cf. section 'II.C.5. The absolute Self' below.

> […] that One is cause of the cause (*aition de ekeino tou aitiou*). He is then in a greater degree something like the most causative (*aitiôtaton*) and truest reason (*aitia*) of all, possessing all together the intellectual reasons (*aitias*) which are going to be from Him and generative of what is not as it chanced but as He Himself willed. And His willing is not irrational, or of the random, or just as it happened to occur to Him, but as it ought to be, since nothing there is random. For this reason Plato speaks of 'due' and 'right moment' (*kairon*), desiring to indicate as far as possible that it is far from 'as it chanced', but what it is is what it ought to be. But if this is what ought to be, it is not so irrationally, and if it is the right moment it has the most authentic mastery among the things which come after it, and has priority in its own right and is not what it in a way chanced to be, but what He in a way wished (*eboulêthê*) to be, since He wishes (*bouletai*) what ought to be and what ought to be and the actuality of what ought to be are one; and it is not what ought to be as a substrate, but as the first actuality (*energeia*) revealing itself as what it ought to be. For this is how one has to speak of Him since one is unable to speak as one should.

There is another option than to conclude that Plotinus let himself be influenced directly by Neopythagoreans, Jews or Christians when writing treatise VI.8. I propose it is much more likely that Plotinus has seen the conception of self-causation in the Neopythagoreans and especially in the Judean explicitly voluntarist conception of the origin of everything found in, for instance, the Jewish Middle Platonist Philo – whom he most likely read[222] – as a challenge to reopen the question from Plato's *Euthyphro* and *Timaeus* (29e-30a) and find the Platonic answer to the relationship between the will [in the *Euthyphro* 10a-11b: love (*to philoun*, 10a) and wishing (*boulomai*, 10c, *boulesthai*, 11a)] and the reason of the ultimate principle (cf. II.1.1.1-4 & 15).[223] Indeed, statements on the self-sufficiency of God (*auto heautôi hikanon*) apart from anything else are also found in Philo's *On the Change of Names* (27-28), but Plotinus probably intended to cleanse that very self-sufficiency of the supreme

222. Cf. *index fontium* in the 1983 *editio minor*.

223. Kahn (1988) 234-59 is right to point to the element of "what is up to us", choice and will in Aristotle as distinct from Dihle (1982) 68, 71, who believes the will is essentially introduced as a philosophical issue only by Judaism. However, Plato in the *Euthyphro* and the *Republic* (617e) already considers the metaphysical implications of arbitrary choice (*hairesis*), and divine will. Such speculations are, as Armstrong (1982) 399 mentions, implied in the *Timaeus* (41a-d) and the *Laws* (903a-907b) as well, cf. also the brief survey of the role of the will in Plato done by Solignac (1996) 103-06.

principle from any voluntarist taints – as are evident, for instance, in Philo's *On the Making of the World* (23) – by referring back to the relatively clear-cut problem in Plato.

In the *Euthyphro*, handed down as the first text of the Platonic corpus, the concern of Socrates and his, nominally, "straight-minded" or "righteous" interlocutor, the priest Euthyphro, is for the pious (10a, 10d). However, the question was naturally reformulated later concerning the universal Good, whether God is good because of – i.e. being subject to what appears as the sufficient reason – Goodness or only because of God's arbitrary will that might just as well be evil. Plotinus reformulated and answered the question, thereby stopping the otherwise infinite regress of Forms of goodness in III.9.9.12-17:

> So the Good is beyond thinking. But the Good will not have consciousness (*parakolouthêsei*). What, then, would its consciousness be of? A knowledge of itself as being good or not? Well, then, if it is of itself as being good, the Good exists already before the consciousness; but if the consciousness makes it good, the Good would not exist before it, so that the knowledge itself would not exist, since it is of the Good.

It should come as no surprise that in Plotinus, will and reason can only coincide in the One, even more so since the One as the reason for Goodness will be beyond Goodness and at any rate beyond the Form of the Good (cf. VI.7.24.4-30, VI.7.25.18-24, VI.7.41.28-30, VI.9.6.39-42 & 55-57, VI.9.9.2, V.6.6.34, V.5.13).[224] On the other hand, will and reason are presented as distinct in the One itself only for pedagogical purposes, as Plotinus – after the model of a similar pedagogical manner of presentation in, for instance, Plato's *Timaeus* (34b-c) – says in VI.8.13.1-5:

> But if one must bring in these names of what we are looking for, let it be said again that it was <not> correct to use them, because one must not make it two even for the sake of forming a notion (*epinoian*) of it; whereas some of them are now said for the sake of persuasion and we must depart a little from correct thinking in our discourse.

224. As distinct from, e.g., Beierwaltes (1990) xxxiv, who speaks of the One as "Wesensausdruck des Guten". It is the other way round. On these grounds Parfit (1998) 26 is wrong when he ascribes a so-called axiarchic view to Plotinus and Plato and dismisses their views because of some implausible consequences connected with a supposed cosmological axiarchy. Goodness is not the ultimate principle for Plotinus, nor is it, arguably – from Plotinus' analysis – for Plato.

Rist acknowledges that "Plotinian studies would be greatly advanced if we could identify the reasons why Plotinus wrote *Ennead* 6.8." In that connection, it is probably correct, as O'Meara has pointed out, that Alexander of Aphrodisias' discussion of the power of the gods in his *On Fate* XXXII could have presented the immediate intellectual occasion for Plotinus' discussion, since there are some clear references to it in VI.8 as in I.8 and III.1 as well. Plotinus' answer, however, is not just a compromise inclining towards absolute freedom rather than towards a necessity of subjection; it simply satisfies the question raised in Plato's *Euthyphro*.[225] He has found what he believed to be the answer elsewhere in the Platonic corpus.

Absolute mastery belongs to the divine, we read in the *Phaedo* (79e-80a) and the *Parmenides* (134d), and the view of Plotinus is that absolute mastery must mean absolute freedom (VI.8.7.26-32). Arbitrariness is not a precondition of freedom; it would be a deficiency in freedom (VI.8.7.32-37). Freedom is rather power, self-sufficient power, and, by tautological observation, power is only there if it can effect something. Absolute, i.e. infinite, power is absolute freedom, but power must be used to the best possible effect to avoid any trace of arbitrariness. According to Plotinus, that is why the One in its absolute freedom must coincide with the Good for everything other than itself, cf. *Republic* (379b). In order to be truly the Good for everything else, the Good must be synonymous with self-sufficient reason itself, the One.[226] That is at the same time why It must produce something beyond Itself.

This conception combines with what is said in the *Republic* (381c), that no god or man by arbitrary free will (*hekôn*) makes himself worse than he is. God cannot then choose arbitrarily and still remain God, as Plotinus frequently says in his treatise VI.8 (VI.8.9.1-10, VI.8.10.25-37, VI.8.21.1-7). Rather, He will stay what He is, and since He has no failure (cf. still *Republic* 381c), He must by necessity give away from His infinite power what by necessity is less good than Himself. It also turns out to be Plotinus' affirmative answer to the problem he poses in the beginning of VI.8, namely whether freedom is reconcilable with a lack of self-determination to act or not (VI.8.4.4-7).[227] The One must

225. As distinct from O'Meara (1992a) 346: "It does not seem to me to be necessary to search further for the starting-point of *Ennead* VI 8."

226. Cf. section 'III.B.2. Inequality of worth' below.

227. Cf. Vacherot (1846) 399-400 and as distinct from the Thomist views of Henry (1931) 338-39 and Gorman (1940) 402-03, who demand a self-determination of God to create or not for Plotinus' philosophy to be satisfying. The latter thinks "The case is other with St. Thomas. Here we have a true liberality, for God is the good whether He creates or does not create, whether from the standpoint of the creature or from His own." Cf. Salmona →

act in the very best way because It is Itself. Consequently, Plotinus replies to the problematic of the *Euthyphro* by proclaiming the One (VI.8.9.21-23):

> […] really Origin and really the Good, not active according to the Good – for in this way He would seem to be following another – but being one, what He is, so that He is not active according to That, but is That.

These considerations have an immediate impact on the way we conceive of the One and any other cause in Plotinus, since every cause is due to a sufficient reason and, ultimately, to the self-sufficient reason of the One. Apart from a minor reference to the paternity of Aphrodite perhaps (III.5[50].2.32-35, cf. *Euthyphro* 6a-b, *Republic* 377e-378a),[228] Plotinus might seem to take no direct quotations from the *Euthyphro*,[229] but his solution in VI.8 nevertheless radicalises the indirect teaching of Plato's *Euthyphro* by declaring the One of hypothesis I from the *Parmenides* its own and, at the same time, the only self-sufficient reason (cf. II.3.6.20). In so far as the One has a will (cf. II.1.1.2), it can only will itself (VI.8.21.10-19). Reason and will must then be one in the One (cf. VI.8.13.43-53).

Plotinus touches upon the problematic of the *Euthyphro* both before and after treatise VI.8[39]. We saw this above in the quotation from III.9[13].9.12-17, and in treatise VI.7[38].23-25, immediately preceding VI.8, the Good is similarly explicitly presented as exercising not just any arbitrary force but only the self-sufficient power of the One (VI.7.23.4-18). It is desirable and the Good for everything by necessity and only because of the self-sufficiency of its unity, for otherwise, something else might just as well become the incidentally needed good (VI.7.24.4-17). In contrast to these inferior things, the One is certainly not the Good merely by being desirable. On the contrary, it is desirable by being the absolute Good (VI.7.25.16-18). These are all problems raised in the *Euthyphro* and answered by Plotinus with a combination of Platonic tenets of thought appearing mainly in the *Republic* and the *Philebus*. Later, in treatise III.2[47], Plotinus finds that piety demands that one not blame

→ (1967) 115, the apt remark of Armstrong (1982) 404 on the Christian demand for a self-determination of God and notes 211 and 217 above.

228. Cf. Armstrong's note to his 1967 translation of the passage.

229. According to the extensive but far from exhaustive *index fontium* in the 1983 *editio minor*. For traces of quotations in VI.8.19.15, VI.8.20.17-19, VI.8.21.31-32 and V.5.9.17-18 from the *Euthyphro* (13d) and in III.3.2 from the *Euthyphro* (13e-14a), however, cf. section 'II. C.7. Puppets, slaves or assistants?' below. For traces of a quotation in IV.3.4.31-33 from the *Euthyphro* (2d, 13d), cf. chapter 'III.A. Coming to imperial Rome' below.

the structure of the universe for what appears as its shortcomings (III.2.7.41-43). Since we are capable of being guilty of impiety, however, we must have an absolutely free principle of action within (III.2.10.8-19). Plotinus' frame of reference here is also the treatment of piety in the *Apology of Socrates* and, especially, the *Laws* (885b-888d, 906d-907d). On the other hand, the argument made by Plotinus in the next treatise, III.3[48], that acts that delight the gods (*theois phila*) will be parts of Providence since the gods rejoice at Providence (III.3.5.21-24), essentially borrows a formulation that appears in the *Euthyphro* (10a-11b, 15b). Plotinus shows that he knew the problematic of the *Euthyphro* quite well.

In consequence, there is nothing unplatonic about Plotinus' writing treatise VI.8.[230] Instead, he shows himself to be a Neoplatonist philosopher (cf. *VP* 14.18-20) approaching Plato's level of subtlety – as we shall soon further investigate at the end of this part of the book.

II.A.4. Sufficient Providence

Since the One is a self-sufficient reason, we must suppose either one single logical reason or more interconnected logical reasons behind everything derived from the One.

The Stoics for instance usually considered Providence (*pronoia*) to be a principle that governs sensible reality towards the best, cf. *Timaeus* (30a-c). In Plotinus, it is clear, however, that this limited definition of Providence will not do, although he refers to that conception and discusses it (VI.8.17.1-21).[231] For Providence not only governs the movements of Soul that make up the sensible world, but also the movements within Intellect. Particular souls' descents and ascents are all governed by one such principle (*perainomenôn hûph' hena logon*, IV.3.12.17) or law (*nomos*, IV.3.13.22-32).[232] We know that Forms of

230. As distinct from Rist (1982) 108 while only partly affirming the note by Armstrong in his 1988 translation of VI.8.1 that Plotinus is "building up his own distinctive Platonic view of human freedom, that we are only truly free when we live on our highest level in the realm of Intellect." Cf. discussion in chapter 'II.C. Determinism disrupted' below.

231. As distinct from Mitchell (1997) 220.

232. As distinct from Dörrie (1977) 84-86. For instance, Dörrie (1977) 85 n. 77 writes that Plotinus in III.2.1.11-13 both renounces and strictly rejects that there could be Providence for the particular human soul. What Plotinus in fact does there instead is postpone discussion of this till later in the same treatise, since Providence of the particular is obviously →

particular human souls are in Intellect, but from that circumstance alone we would not be able to infer validly that Providence is a principle of the whole Intellect, since Forms of particular persons are after all only parts of Intellect. What makes the conclusion valid is instead the fact that particular human souls ascend further, to the One, and in one respect become indistinguishable from it. Descents from and ascents to the One must be governed by the same principle as ascents to and descents from Intellect. With clear reference to the argument concerning the meritocratic relation between excellent, proactive men and common, lazy and mean men in the *Laws* (757a-758a), Plotinus says (III.3.5.1-8, cf. III.2.6):

> Providence, then, which in its descent from above reaches from the beginning to the end (*ex archês eis telos*), is not equal as in a numerical distribution but differs in different places according to a law of correspondence, just as in a single living creature, which is dependent on its principle down to its last and lowest part, each part having its own, the better part having the better part of the activity, and that which is at the lower limit still active in its own way and undergoing the experiences which are proper to it as regards its own nature and its co-ordination with anything else.

Intellect is loosely (cf. III.3.5.15-17) said by Plotinus (IV.3.13.22-23) to be subject to the "Fate (*heimarmenên*)" of "staying There [at the place of Intellect], however much it also sends out", but Providence must be the right des-

→ secondary to the Providence of the all (IV.3.12.17-25), cf. III.2.1.13-15: "Let us postulate what we call universal Providence and connect up with it what comes after." Soon after, in III.2.13.18-22 Plotinus says, referring to the *Laws* (902d-903a): "We must conclude that the universal order is for ever something of this kind from the evidence of what we see in the All, how this order extends to everything, even to the smallest, and the art is wonderful which appears, not only in the divine beings but also in the things which one might have supposed Providence would have despised for their smallness […]."

Similarly, Sorabji (1993) 166 refers to Plotinus IV.3.25.20-24 as partial evidence for saying: "Plotinus and many other Neoplatonists agreed that God's providence did not extend to individuals, and the first recorded Neoplatonist to extend divine providence to all individuals was Proclus in the fifth century AD, drawing on Iamblichus from the fourth century." The text referred to, however, does not say there is no Providence (*pronoia*) in Intellect, but only that there is no memory (*mnêmê*) there. Providence does not require memory, especially not if it coincides with an unavoidable law, as it surely does according to previous passages in the same treatise, IV.3.13.23-32 (cf. analogously regarding Soul's suspension of calculation in IV.4.12.13-20 and Soul's suspension of preference in, e.g., IV.4.36.24-27).

ignation for this principle that governs whatever came to be from the One towards the best. Arguing against the opposite claim of the Gnostics, who deny Providence for the sensible world at least, Plotinus says (II.9.16.14-16, II.9.9.64-65, cf. *Laws* 901a-903a):

> What piety is there in denying that Providence extends to this world and to anything and everything?

According to Plotinus, Providence is an adequate synonym for that reason that penetrates all things (*dia pantôn phoitêsasan aitian*, III.1.2.19), cf. Plato's *Phaedo* (97c-d):

> Hence if one wanted to discover the reason (*tên aitian*) for anything coming into being or perishing or existing, the question to ask was how it was best for that thing to exist or to act or be acted upon.

Plotinus declares Providence to be the principle of the All (*to pan*), which is already said (IV.3.12.13) to be independent in itself (*autarkes autôi*). Apart from the Stoics' notion of a Providence of the sensible universe taken as the point of departure for Plotinus' discussion of Providence in III.2 for instance, the All in this context must be understood as something much more than just the sensible universe, precisely because it encompasses all descents from and ascents to both Intellect and the One. If Providence is an ordering of multiplicity, it will already be operative when Intellect is made, as (V.8.5.1-3):

> Some wisdom makes all the things which have come into being, whether they are products of art or nature, and everywhere it is a wisdom which is in charge of their making.

Providence will possess such immediate wisdom. For although Intellect is the origin of the manifold of Soul, the One is itself the origin and, indirectly, the maker of the manifold of Intellect. The One must also be the ultimate origin of the manifold of Soul by virtue of the law of substitution (cf. VI.8.17.18-21). We can then validly infer that Providence is the sufficient reason for the ordering of everything that has ever arisen from the One (cf. III.3.7.6-12). Indirectly, Plotinus implies this, by saying (VI.7.39.26-27):

> But it is enough for Providence that He exists from whom all things come.

Providence is distinguishable from the One in so far as the One is "directed to itself" (V.1.6.18, VI.8.16.28, VI.8.17.25-27) and not in any sense towards the manifold, while Providence must be directed towards the manifold. The best order of things brought forward by Providence as the principle of everything that has come to be must, however, rely on the Unity of the One, for the One or God is the Good for everything. Plotinus presents an indication for Providence being indistinguishable from the One, for:

> […] not every kind of provident care (*pronoia*) for the inferior deprives the being exercising it (*to pronooun*) of its ability to remain in the highest.

He calls that both 'ideal' and 'real' Providence for an "inactive command by royal authority" (IV.8.2.25-30), and elsewhere, he predominantly predicates the One or the Good as "king".[233] Also, only truly wise and divine men (cf. *Sophist* 253e-254b, *Meno* 99d-100a) will be able to discern the immediate Providence of the One, since, presumably, both Providence and the ability to distinguish Providence are "the privilege of God" (III.3.6.13-17, cf. Simonides fr. 542.14 in *Protagoras* 341e). For profane purposes, we could probably distinguish between the One and Providence only by saying that the One is the cause or activity and Providence is the effect or passivity, cf. *Theaetetus* (156a-b, 157a). For activity and passivity are necessarily connected, but remain distinct. This mutual relation has major significance for Plotinus, as we will see later.[234]

Particular human souls are our main concern here. We should observe the order of succession: first, essentially, descent from the One and then, later again, essentially, ascent to the One. But why is there any human soul at all? Why are there more than one? Since souls must be distinguished from each other according to the Principle of the Non-Identity of Discernibles (III.2.17.74-83), what is it exactly that distinguishes them from each other from the very outset?

Let us postpone answers to the former two questions for a while in order to answer the latter as formulated by Plotinus (III.3.3.3):

233. Cf. section 'III.B.1. The king' below.

234. As distinct from Gurtler (2002) 118, 120 (with n. 1): "He [Plotinus] tacitly admits that Plato's works do not provide such a causal theory. He must therefore borrow from Aristotle, especially his understanding of act and potency, but needs to do a bit of reworking to allow causality to operate between different ontological levels." Cf. section 'II.C.5. The absolute Self' below.

> But for what reason is a man the sort of person he is?

– cf. the general question concerning sensible things raised by Plotinus (IV.7.5.1-7):

> But why, I ask, are the movements different, and not one, when every body has one movement? If they decide for preferences (*proaireseis*) responsible for some and rational principles for others, that is correct; but preference does not belong to body and neither do rational principles which are various, while body is one and simple and has no share in rational principle of this kind, but only as much rational principle as is given to it by what made it hot or cold.

Chapter II.B

Distinguishable souls

An easy answer to the question is to repeat the previous result that particular persons are distinguished by their respective Forms. The particular Form is what constitutes the thinking of the particular intellect, for the particular intellect is simply the Form of the particular (IV.3.5.5-8), although only a minor part of it perhaps will be actualised for the embodied self.

In Aristotelian terms, however, the thinking of the particular intellect would be considered a certain state (*hexis*) of the particular soul, and Plotinus agrees (VI.1.11.1-12, cf. II.6.3.22) with Aristotle in the *Categories* (8b26-27), that a state just as much as a disposition (*diathesis*) is a species of Quality. According to Plotinus, a Quality is a trace (*ichnos*) of a Form (II.6.3.7-14, VI.1.10-12, VI.1.29.1-24, VI.3.16-20), cf. *Timaeus* (53b). He claims that states are fulfilled dispositions (VI.1.11.5-6), but as can be inferred by virtue of the law of substitution, they are both reckoned as traces of the Form.

"The original disposition (*diatheseôs archetûpou*)" of the particular human soul (IV.3.13.3) must then also be expected to be a trace of the Form of the particular, or perhaps rather its pattern. For this original disposition of the particular soul is what most decisively distinguishes it from other souls (II.9.13.22-25). It is mentioned in close connection, i.e. in the same line as, its "original preference (*proaireseôs […] archetûpou*)" of life, without it being clear whether both are traces of the Form or whether the original preference might be decisive for both the disposition and the whole Form of the particular soul. The latter option would give a promise of freedom as the basis of personality, which, at least at a first glance, seems to be absent from the former.

However, the last option must be excluded from consideration, which leaves us with the first option. For even souls choosing must be distinguished from

each other in order to be a plurality at all (cf., e.g., V.7.3.5-13). Therefore, as Plotinus says (III.2[47].18.2-3):

> […] they were not equal, as we might say, from the beginning (*ex archês*); for they, too, in the same way as the rational principle, are unequal parts as a consequence of their separation.[235]

Similarly, (III.1[3].2.8-9):

> And different ways of behaving (*tropoi*) and characters (*êthê*) and fortunes (*tûchai*) require us to go on to the remoter principles responsible (*axiousin*).

Plotinus concludes (III.3[48].1.24-27):

> […] particular men do their own things in the way in which they have been disposed by nature (*hêi pephûkasi*), and different men different things. And what is done, and living well or badly, follows according to their natures.

The same message about our different "characters, characteristic actions and emotions", each of them emerging from a different state of soul (*apo hexeôs*), is found in II.3[52].9.1-14, where the Spindle of Necessity mentioned in the *Republic* (616c-617d) is said "to spin a thread at the birth of each one of us".

A necessary distinction prior to personal choice could only be made due to the principle of Providence. This must at least involve different original dispositions of each particular soul (IV.3.24.7-8), cf. *Phaedo* (107d). For if the souls did not have different dispositions, they could probably not choose different lives.

Now the *Republic* (617d-620e) does contain a description of a lottery (617d-e) concerning the order in which each of the discarnate souls is going to make his choice (*hairesis*) of life. Plotinus also refers to this order as their lots and preferences (*proaireseis*, II.3.15.1-12). In Plato, it can be rendered quite coherent with the account of the incarnation of the soul in the *Timaeus* (41e) that:

235. Cf. Vacherot (1846) 441-42 on the relation between the difference and the inequality of souls.

> […] there would be appointed a first incarnation (*genesis*) one and the same for all that none might suffer disadvantage at the hands of the Divine Craftsman.

For incarnation – or descent into the world of sense, as Plotinus would say – is a later stage common to all particular souls.

Plotinus agrees with this latter aspect of Plato's account but obviously – according to the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles – considers the lottery mentioned in the *Republic* an empty replication inviting an infinite regress concerning what would then distinguish souls participating in a lottery, which are yet not distinguished at all by any assignments of choices in a pure lottery or by any content of their choices. Plotinus simply denies the lottery of choices and announces that the content of the choice, which he takes for granted as real, will after all always be predetermined by the soul's preference (III.4.5.2-4, cf. III.2.4.36-44):[236]

> The choice (*hairesis*) in the other world which Plato speaks of is really a riddling representation of the soul's universal (*katholou*) and permanent (*pantachou*) preference (*proairesin*) and disposition (*diathesin*).

So Plotinus distinguishes the conscious choice – for instance the choice of any next, "second life" according to the *Phaedrus* (249b) – from the deeper original preference that is just a synonym for the original disposition of the soul ordained by Providence.[237] He has probably deliberately developed the notion in order to refute the idea of any "un-predeterminist"[238] self-determination as found in the Aristotelian Alexander of Aphrodisias *On Fate* (CLXXX.26-28):

236. Blumenthal (1971b), e.g., while in vain trying to find criteria for distinctions between souls in Plotinus, does not mention the choice, preference or disposition of souls as worth consideration. Nevertheless, he finds it certain enough to say (p. 59) that "the pattern is not, as one might expect, one of divergence from the top."
237. Cf. Clark (1943) 22: "There never was an original choice […]" also alluded to by Müller (1914) 468, 473-74, 488, and as distinct from Gollwitzer (1900) 27-28 who, although he has a fine description of the "urbildliche Disposition oder Willensrichtung", at the same time believes it is "frei" without specifying whether he believes it is free by the soul's own free choice – which would be wrong if one were to presuppose an original preference already *ad infinitum* – or the soul's inner determination – and which only would be right according to determinist compatibilist assumptions.
238. The designation of Bobzien (1998b) 134.

> […] we have this power (*tên exousian*) of choosing (*proeilêphamên*) the opposite and not everything that we choose (*hairometha*) has predetermining reasons (*prokatabeblêmenas aitias*), because of which it is not possible for us not to choose this.

The original predetermined preference is established by Plotinus as the very element that distinguishes human souls and their fundamental Forms from each other.[239] Both the soul and the further choices of the soul are then founded upon this judgement (*krisis*, VI.4.6.14-16), which transmits the discrete Parmenidean association (DK 28B7.5, 8.15, 8.55) that the soul is only distinguished from the single Unity (DK 28B8.6) exactly by this original preference and initially unconscious (pre-)judgement.[240] Due to the Principle of the Non-Identity of Discernibles, particular souls must logically have different preferences, though neither the One nor its Providence, from which they have come, had any preference themselves at all (III.3.3.18-20).

The particular soul's preference, like its disposition, evolves (cf. IV.3.12.37-38) according to decisions in and between subsequent lives (III.4.5.1-9), but they are all fundamentally conditioned by their original preference and disposition. In contrast to Aristotle's notion of *proairesis* in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1113a9-12), in Plotinus the original preference is prior to any deliberation.[241] In Plotinus, *proairesis* is not even a settled, but originally free, deliberated choice as it is in Epictetus,[242] for the original preference or disposition of the particular soul eventually determines whether it ascends to Soul, Intellect or the One (IV.3.24.7-8). This holds even when, as is the case for everything, the

239. Cf. Heinrich Dörrie in discussion with Rist (1975) 120: "Sehen Sie eine Verbindung zwischen dem Problem *proairesis* und dem Problem *merismos*? Denn: gäbe es die Individuation = *merismos* nicht, die *proairesis* aller Menschen müßte die gleiche sein – und die ganze Frage nach guter und nach böser *proairesis* bestünde nicht."

However, on purely logical grounds, according to the Principle of the Non-Identity of Discernibles, Plotinus would consider Dörrie's counterfactual suggestion impossible.

240. On Parmenidean traits in Plotinus, cf. Ousager (1995b-96).

241. Cf. the correction of Rist (1975) 113, 115 made by Phillips (1995) 137, 141, 151-52. Phillips (1995) 140-42 also repudiates the Aristotelian interpretations of Plotinus' concept of *proairesis* by Iamblichus, Proclus and, later, Gollwitzer (1900) 10-11 and Kristeller (1929). Despite a good explanation of the etymology of *proairesis*, Crocker (1956) 34 still translates it somewhat superficially as "free choice".

242. As distinct from Bobzien (1998a) 411, although it is correct as Gollwitzer (1900) 10 points out that *proairesis* is also used in a looser, ordinary sense in, e.g., I.2.5.14-16 on what is *aproaireton*, "unintended".

preference of all souls, by virtue of being themselves, is to be directed towards the One (II.3.9.38-39, IV.4.35.32-34).[243] When the hypostasis of Soul is declared to be "before preference (*proaireseôs*) in birth" (IV.4.36.26), it cannot consequently be so for particular human souls, or, probably, the preference spoken of here (which the Soul precedes in age) will be the evolving conscious preferences or choices and not the original preference and disposition.[244]

When a life is chosen in the intermediate state, it is actually the principle overriding the life that is chosen (III.4.3.9-10). Plotinus equates (III.4.5.24-29, II.3.15.4-5) this principle of "fulfilling what one has chosen" with the personal guardian spirit (*daimôn*) spoken of by Plato in the *Phaedo* (107d), the *Symposium* (202d-203a), the *Republic* (617d-620e), the *Cratylus* (397d-398c), the *Timaeus* (40d-e, 90a-c) and the *Laws* (732c, 877a, 906a), just as Plato in the *Apology* has Socrates refer to his "little guardian spirit" (*daimonion*, 27c-d, 31c-d, 40a-b) and has him comment on this as a half-divine principle for his personal life and conduct (reflected by Plotinus in VI.7.6.26-33, I.2.6.3-7).[245] According to Plotinus, for some living wholly on the level of Intellect, the One itself above Intellect could be the guardian spirit (III.4.6.3-5), while other people have different guardian spirits (III.5.7.30-36). Since more than one person can have the same guardian spirit at the same time, it cannot determine the course of the particular person completely.[246] The fundamental part is played by the person's original disposition and preference, cf. III.4.6.8-10:

> Does the spirit, then, always and in every way accomplish its task successfully? Not altogether, since the soul is of such a disposition that it is of a particular kind in particular circumstances and so has a life and a preference (*proairesin*) corresponding to its kind and circumstances.

243. As distinct from Rist (1975) 112-13, who thinks that *proairesis* implies deliberation and therefore could not determine descent. He writes: "The 'choice' of evil is deliberate but not deliberated." If *proairesis* is considered prior to deliberation, however, the same will exactly be true of *proairesis*. On Rist's own terms, the "choice" of evil could then be predetermined by *proairesis*. So contrary to what Rist (1975) 116 says, *most* of the acts of the soul are a fortiori acts of the *proairesis*. In chapter 'II.C. Determinism disrupted' below I argue why on the other hand not all acts of the soul can be determined by *proairesis*.
244. As distinct from Phillips (1995) 142, who, I believe, exaggerates his resistance to Rist's claim that the Plotinian *proairesis* – only – operates at the level of discursive reasoning by instead claiming that it only operates at a higher level of Soul and particular souls.
245. As distinct from Rist (1963b) 14, who identifies the *daimôn* in the *Timaeus* (90a) with Intellect (*nous*). His presentation of references to the *daimonion* in several other places in Plato and his comparison with the *daimôn* in Plotinus are commendable.
246. As distinct from Müller (1914) 475.

Although Plotinus employs language loosely in the context and calls it "Fate (*heimarmenê*)" instead of Providence, logical necessity and the corresponding fact of a plurality of human souls require that during a life span, each soul is (III.4.6.56-60) "not moved and does not will or actualise the same way in the same circumstances", cf. *Laws* (894b-c, 904b-c). This will show up both at the level of Providence and, in the consequences thereof, at the level of physical necessity, which Plotinus calls, in shorthand, "Fate" or seemingly more particular chance, "Fortune (*tûchê*)". The synonymity of the soul's "preference" and "fortune" underscores the strand of universal determinism in Plotinus (III.1.9.1-9, cf. III.1.2.17-38). For instance, unification with the One will depend upon the good fortune (*eutûchê*) of the soul (VI.5.7.11-13, VI.7.34.8-9 & 31-32, VI.9.11.4). A plurality of undescended souls demands a corresponding plurality of distinguishable original preferences and dispositions. The order of these preferences must be ordained by the sufficient reason commonly known as Providence.

There is a web of life ordained by Providence, which is closely adjusted to Justice itself (III.2.13.16-17, IV.3.24.8). Providence and Justice therefore become quite indistinguishable, apart from the fact that Providence is basically a principle with respect to things to come, the future (cf. IV.4.12.13-26), while Justice is a principle concerning things which have been, the past (cf. *Laws* 715e-716b, 717d). Both aspects, however, are encompassed by the same law of Inescapability (*Adrasteia*, cf. *Phaedrus* 248c). It is interesting that Plotinus emphasises different aspects at different times. Whereas in a treatise from his middle period (IV.3[27].16), he explicitly writes that not everything bad happens as penalties for previous sins – since they might happen in order to establish a greater good and so in the larger perspective will involve later compensation of those who are wrongfully harmed – it seems as though in a later treatise (III.2[47].13.1-17, cf. *Laws* 870d-e, 872d-873a), he has abandoned this view and thinks that everything presently happening to a person is by Justice his own fault or merit without much delay. It would take us too far to investigate whether Plotinus is really inconsistent here, but suffice it to say, even in the later text he still emphasises the aspect of the future (III.2.13.3), i.e. the aspect of Providence.

In Plato's *Phaedrus* (254e) the word "providence (*pronoia*)" is attached to the particular human intellect (*nous*), which is previously (247c) called simply "the soul's steersman". Presumably, Plotinus considers Providence as such to be inherent in "the original preference and disposition" of each particular human soul, in just the same way (as we have seen above) that he considers

Intellect as such to be present potentially in the intellect of each particular human soul (cf. IV.3.2.23-24 & 49-58, V.9.9.1-3, IV.9.5.7-26). The providence of the particular then reflects universal Providence. The particular providence for everything is its safeguard (*to phûlaktikon*), being a substantial part of the *in-esse* of its Form (VI.7.3.15-19), while for the particular human being, it is the guardian spirit.

In a number of places Plotinus seems to equate the guardian spirit with what Plato in the *Republic* (436a-437a) compares with the declination (*apoklinein*, 436e) of the axis of the soul as if it were a spinning top, for the soul can both be standing still (*hestanai*) and be moved (*kineisthai*) at the same time like a top spinning around a fixed axis (*to kentron*). The possible inclination of the axis decides whether or not the axis itself is moved. Plotinus recommends that the soul is never declined towards anything exterior (VI.9.7.16-18), as the order set by the One without declination (*aklines*, VI.8.9.33) certainly does not decline arbitrarily (III.3.6.19-20, II.9.2.3). Under ideal circumstances, one should not be declining (*apoklinôn*, III.7.5.9-10) away from eternity (*aklinê pantê*, III.7.11.1-4), although what has been described as Law and Order simply predetermined a small tilting (*smikra rhopê*) of the Soul's mixing-bowl mentioned in the *Timaeus* (41d) that makes souls not only of first, but also of second and third rank (III.3.4.44-48, cf. III.2.4.37-44) according to their "fading away" from the origin (cf. III.3.3.23-26), i.e. souls which will not unify with the One in the present lifetime as well. In order for unification with the One to happen, it is an absolute precondition that there be no inclining (*apoklinôn*, VI.9.11.14) in any direction in a person's being, and certainly no tilting downwards (III.2.4.36-38). This is equally true for all who unite with the One and so definitely will have the One as their guardian spirit. The inclination of the soul must therefore, in just the same way as the guardian spirit, common for more than one soul at the same time, be distinguished from the original disposition or preference of the soul, particular for each particular soul.

We have observed that the original disposition must be distinguished from the guardian spirit and so also from inclination of the soul, but they are naturally connected like the particular is closely connected with the universal in Plotinus (cf., e.g., IV.3.13.23-24). As noted in the previous part of the book, it does not have to be by a derivation of deficient imitation only, for in the case of man the particular could also rise to identity with the absolute. By our dispositions and through our souls we are connected to "the guardian spirits" predominantly in Intellect and to what is beyond them, cf. IV.4.45.13-18:

> […] but we also introduce the other nature which we have, in that we are connected (*sûnaphthentes*) by what we have that is akin to us in things outside us: we have certainly become connected (*sûnapheis*), or rather we are connected, by our souls and dispositions (*diatheseis*) both to what is next to us in the region of the spirits (*en tôi daimoniôi topoi*) and to what lies beyond (*epekeina*) them and it is impossible that it should be unknown what sort of people we are.

The usage here is closely related to the imagery of connectedness of the centre of the soul to the centre of everything already dealt with above (especially VI.9.8.1-22).[247] The mentioned "beyond" is the "beyond (*epekeina*)" from the simile of the sun.[248] So in its very core, the soul can attain identity with the One. Is this tantamount to attaining a level of freedom even beyond Providence? What would this mean in turn for Providence, both particular and universal?

247. Cf. sections 'I.C.2. The One within' and 'I.C.5. Unity or plurality first?' above.
248. As distinct from Armstrong's note to his 1984 translation of the passage. Armstrong suggests that, corresponding to popular 'cosmic religiosity' at the time, it only concerns "the Upper Cosmos of the heavenly bodies".

Chapter II.C

Determinism disrupted

II.C.1. The causal nexus of ultimate unification

We have not yet answered two questions raised at the end of the penultimate chapter above, namely, why is there any human soul and why is there more than one. These questions can now be partially answered according to the basic principle of Providence already sketched out.

The existence of the human soul must involve an advantage over Providence, i.e. an advantage in order to bring forward from the One what is best. That there is a plurality of human souls and not just one must be for the same sufficient reason (IV.8.1.46-50), cf. *Timaeus* (29e-30a, 41b-d). If the existence of human souls at some stage involves biological procreation, a manifold of persons could also become a physical necessity. In Plotinus, however, the physical necessity could only be a necessity in so far as it is a metaphysical necessity beforehand.

This is only a partial answer. To arrive at a full answer, we must answer the last question of what ultimate unification and identity with the One mean for Providence, both particular and universal. Since the One continuously creates and determines Providence, Intellect and the Forms and among them the Forms of particular persons and, then, Soul and particular souls, it could mean something quite devastating to this whole pattern, if the particular person became identical with the One, albeit only in one respect and for a short while. For while the descent from and the ascent to the One is determined by Providence, Providence cannot determine what happens at the moment of identity with the One.[249]

249. This approach was previously partly alluded to by Trouillard (1949) 355.

This sounds fascinating, however the question is, whether it could make any sort of difference in the intelligible as well as the sensible world, a question analogous to the rhetorical question raised by Plotinus concerning unification with Soul, IV.3.6.1-3:

> But why has the Soul of the All, which has the same Form as ours, made the universe, but the soul of each particular (*hê de hekastou*) has not, though it too has all things in itself?

If, then, some men actually have the One actualised within them, why do they not make hierarchies of hypostases parallel to the hierarchy of hypostases sprung forth from the One? An answer seems to lie in the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles, according to which the One is indiscriminately the same, no matter for whom it is the Self. If different souls were to make any hierarchies of hypostases simply by being the One and acting as the One, those hierarchies would be identical with the existing one (cf. IV.3.6.17-20).

A very important qualification to this argument, however, is that the eventual causal nexus will be quite different for the One within the particular soul than for the One on its own. Plotinus briefly addresses this problem of the effects of man's unification with the One in I.4.4.11-20:

> But shall we say that he has this perfect kind of life in him as a part of himself? Other men, we maintain, who have it potentially, have it as a part, but the man who is well off, who actually is this and has passed over into identity with it (*metabebêke pros to auto*), [does not have it but] *is* it. Everything else is just something he wears; you could not call it part of him because he wears it without wanting to; it would be his if he united it to him by an act of the will. What then is the Good for him? He is what he has, his own good. The transcendent Good is cause of the good in him; the fact that It is good is different from the fact that It is present to him.

Just as the One (cf. III.8.11.44-45, V.5.13.1-2 & 6, VI.8.16.8-9), the particular human soul in this circumstance does not really have anything but *is* it, is the One. The One itself is nevertheless absolutely distinct from both Intellect and Soul (VI.7.35.42-44), though it has both as its consequences. The causal nexus varies according to what matter is affected by the cause, in this case by the common ultimate cause, the One (cf. VI.3.23.31-33, III.3.5.3-8 & 40-46). As Plotinus says (VI.7.18.10-12):

> For what is not the same (*mê tauton*) could come to be from the selfsame (*apo tou autou*), or, also, what is given in the same way might become differentiated (*allo*) in the things which are going to receive it.

In so far as particular souls are different from the One, while directly influenced by it, their intellects and bodies will limit them therefore in their acts from the One. They could not possibly make up a whole world exactly due to their both intentional and material particularity. As Plotinus says (IV.3.6.15-17):

> There is a difference too, in that the Soul of the all looks towards Intellect as a whole, but the particular souls rather to their own partial (*en merei*) intellects.

Plotinus thinks that particular souls and particular intellects are in fact not annihilated while having the One as their Self (IV.3.5.1-9). Although the particular soul might be present in Intellect only without any simultaneous embodiment in Nature, its unification with the One at some point in a causal chain or – from Soul – at some point in time will not automatically mean annihilation of the particular soul.

It is possible for some to gain a foothold in Intellect for some time (I.3.1.12-18), but if embodied particular souls could retain their state in the One, they would be extremely few. For instance, having a body at the same time will physically demand some occasional sleep and consequently imply interruption of unification (cf. *VP* 8.20-22, 9.16-18), for although absolute unification will be beyond the thought of Intellect, it consists, as we have seen and will see later on,[250] in an absolute attention and wakefulness. So even when Plotinus presents it as both an ideal and an occasional possibility for a human soul of the first rank to be active from this point and live by it (II.3.9.24-27, I.4.6.17-19, I.4.16.9-13, cf. VI.7.6.15-23, I.3.1.12-18), it cannot become a permanent state for a soul in the way that John Bussanich has proposed,[251] in a sense

250. Cf. chapter 'I.B. Unification with Intellect', subsection 'I.B.2.c. A failing criterion' and section 'I.C.1. Envisioning the One' above together with section 'II.C.5. The absolute Self' below.

251. Cf. Hadot (1970-71) 288, O'Meara (1974) 242, 244, Bussanich (1988) 188, Bussanich (1994) 5323 and Bussanich (1997) 363-64 for the view that unifications in general are more habitual than sporadic to Plotinus. Explicitly inspired by Beierwaltes (1985) 146-47 and Hadot's interpretation (1995) 238-50 of the possibility of soul's habitual existence on the level of Intellect (cf. Seidl (1985) 256), a theoretical possibility defended by Bussanich (1988) 188-89, Bussanich (1994) 5325-26, 5328 and Bussanich (1997) 363-64 is to regard the One as the soul's "final and permanent state", although he admits that the possibility of permanency is not explicitly stated by Plotinus.

according to which the whole particular soul would simultaneously be annihilated in its self's absorption into the One. For while former selves of the particular soul are annihilated or pushed aside in ultimate unification, the particular soul is not. A simple confusion of soul and self has caused most of the debate between the theistic and monistic interpretations of unification with the One in Plotinus.[252] Emanation from the One is law-determined, so no matter how many souls might unify their cores with the One, they are all bound to descend with their cores of unity again according to the measures of souls of first, second and third rank (IV.3.12.14-30). The soul does not have the sufficient (*hikanên*) nature to remain in the One (I.2.4.12-13), for although a partless "part", the One within remains within the One, just as another part, the Intellect within, remains within Intellect (IV.1[21].12-13), "it is in soul's nature to be divided" (IV.1[21].8-9). This is a metaphysical law that also explains the physical difficulties.

The impossibility of souls remaining permanently in the One also follows from the fact that a definite number of particular souls exist permanently according to Plotinus (V.7.1.17-18, V.7.3.14-15, IV.3.8.20-22). Some of these souls will receive and, from different angles, gradually reach all the scientific principles of Intellect (I.3.5.1-4). Of these, there is a further constant, definite measure of the number of souls that can – occasionally – unite with the One and those which cannot.[253] In the case of preliminary contemplation, even when the One is in principle present to all (cf. I.6.8.25-27), it could not be present to those who are unable to contemplate it (VI.9.7.3-5). This is all the more so in the case of ultimate unification. Unification with the One will depend upon the good fortune of the soul. This fortune or ability will ultimately be limited to only a few, and who in particular they are is predetermined.

So though all have access to the One in principle (VI.9.7.28-29, IV.3.6.28-34, V.1.12.1-3, V.5.12.33-34, cf. IV.8.4.30-31), even those both physically and metaphorically asleep (V.5.12.9-14), not everyone seems able to unify after all (IV.3.6.28-34, II.3.15.13-17, III.2.4.30-36, III.3.4.4-25, cf. V.8.11.6-7, II.9.18.42-44). As we have noticed, this will not only be due to self-caused hindrances, but is ultimately caused structurally by the fixed measures between those who will unite and those who will not, a fact further stressed by the determinist

252. As distinct from Burque (1940) 162-64, Rist (1963a) 230, Rist (1967) 224, Rist (1989) 188 and Hadot (1990-91) 489, who seem to confuse the soul and the self. Even Blakeley (1992) – whose approach I very much admire, e.g., when he apparently on p. 69 points this fact out to Rist – regrettably interchanges these roles of soul and self pp. 76, 78.

253. Cf. sections 'I.B.5. The gaze of souls' and 'I.B.6. *In-esse* and determinism' above.

in-esse doctrine of the Form of the particular human soul. In this connection, we read that (IV.3.8.16-17, cf. I.8.5.26-30):

> […] the fullness and completion for souls is not the same for all.

This can, however, be understood in three different ways, as follows:

1. the fullness and completion for souls, i.e. unification with the One, is never obtained by all souls;

2. the fullness and completion for souls, i.e. unification with the One, is not obtained by all souls within the same embodied lifetime; or

3. the fullness and completion for souls, i.e. the effect of unification with the One, is not the same for all.

In this book, I argue for both 2) and 3), but against the strong sense of 1).

For it could be argued along the lines of the Master Argument of Diodorus Cronus that the possibility of unifying with the One that cannot become real in the strict sense is no possibility at all. Plotinus will have known this from reading, for instance, Epictetus' *Discourses* (II.19.1-11), and he by all means accepted this conclusion. It is a very strong argument for understanding his acceptance of the possibility of unification with both Soul, Intellect and the One, as existing in principle for every human soul to be procured for by the acts of Providence (III.3.5.18-32), cf. *Timaeus* (42c-d) and *Laws* (902d-903a). Everyone will then become the proactive man initiating the greatest study of all, the study of the Good (cf. *Republic* 505a), for this opportunity is always open (I.4.13.5-6, VI.7.36.3-6), and not just to himself (II.9.9.26-32 & 47-49 & 75-79, cf. IV.3.7.15-16). This will perhaps not happen at the same time (cf. I.1.11.1-8) or in this life (cf. III.5.7.30-36) but in another life, previous or later (cf. IV.4.35.32-37, III.1.9.9-16),[254] since the One has given the soul its need for the One and its desire to ascend to it (VI.7.22.6-21, cf. *Republic* 505e). Because Soul as such is comparatively perfect, there must also be a completion for those particular souls who appear bad (II.9.17.40-56). Since identity with

254. As distinct from Leroux (1996) 299: "not all souls will liberate themselves." The passage IV.4.35.34-37 is under further scrutiny in section 'III.B.9. Dialogue, democracy and human rights' below.

the Good must release the greatest well-being ever possible for man (I.4.4.18-25), the answer to this question will be obvious (I.4.4.8-10):

> But is man different from this when he has it? No, he is not a man at all unless he has this, either potentially or actually […].

If this possibility is ever to become real, the fulfilment by unification with the One must be built into the Form of each particular human soul involving hardly imaginable patterns, cf. IV.3.16.22-23:

> For one must not think the Order (*sûntaxin*) is godless or unjust, but that it is accurate in the distribution of what is appropriate, but it keeps its reasons hidden.

II.C.2. Absolute freedom attained

Consequences of unification of the One within with the One itself will flow forward in the particular human intellect (V.8.11.17-19), and consequently the particular human soul and the particular human body as well.[255] This fundamentally disrupts the determinism we have described above, for the One is itself – in relation to everything else – "the liberator" (VI.8.12.19) and "absolute freedom" (VI.8.8.1-3, VI.8.15.19, VI.8.20.30-34, VI.8.21.30-34). According to Plotinus, that absolute freedom will be attained by those who pursue and possess the One without hindrance (VI.8.7.26-30).[256] Further on, he elaborates on this (VI.8.15.21-26):

> […] surely, when we ascend to This and become This alone and let the rest go, what can we say of it except that we are more than emancipated and more than absolutely powerful (*pleon ê eleutheroi, kai pleon ê autexousioi*)? Who could then make us depend on chances or randomness or just happening when we have become the true life Itself or come to be in It, which has nothing else but is Itself alone (*auto monon*)?

255. Cf. Armstrong (1982) 404: "And in so far as we are united to him his selfhood is perfect freedom, for us as for him."
256. Cf. Weismann (1997) 1167, 1170, 1176. He makes a slip p. 1193 by already ascribing absolute freedom to Intellect.

The consequences of a person's unification with the One will bypass general Providence and its predetermined Form of the particular person.[257] So the necessity that leads to unification with the One is itself disrupted by the effects thereof. If determinism is disrupted, it will however immediately also be recreated by necessity, but now according to the new pattern of affairs resulting from the freedom of ultimate union, effecting itself in the particular causal nexus. As Plotinus says on this causal nexus (III.3.3.1-3):

> Suppose you say "I have power to choose this or that"? But the things that you will choose are included in the universal Order, because your part is not a mere casual interlude in the All but you are counted in as just the person you are.

This is the ultimate background of, for instance, the apparently quite modest utterance of Plotinus (IV.4.39.27): "We by ourselves contribute much to what happens." For it is rooted in the particular human soul potentially being identical with the sufficient reason for everything, the One. Compared to Soul for instance, the particular human soul is "a principle of no small importance (*archês ou smikras ousês*)" (III.1.8.6, V.1.2.12, cf. II.3.15.13-22). Its importance or goodness is comparable to the Goodness of the One (I.7.1.4-7). On its own it can therefore become "a reason for initiating work (*prôtourgou aitias*)", cf. *Laws* (897a) on Soul as such "initiating movements (*prôtourgoi kinêseis*)". Acting in that way, the soul is "emancipated and acting outside the causative reason for the physical universe (*eleuthera kai kosmikês aitias exô*)". For the cause of our actions is not just Soul as such, but also our particular soul (III.1.8.1-11), and we can become highly influential causes (*archai*) ourselves potentially with absolute freedom (*autexousios*, III.2.10.19). This is all a result of the fact that we have not only Soul but also Intellect and the One within our particular soul, for, according to Plotinus, we would not really take part in acts of freedom, unless we took part in the One. From the latter, particular human souls will be capable of "staying above the universe and giving something of themselves", i.e. emanating without diminution of their powers (III.2.7.25-27). The human soul's share (*moira*) of the One within is

257. Cf. Boas (1921) 331 and as distinct from Graeser (1972) 124: "But is it reasonable to speak of the non-empirical self as an *eleutheron* and *autexousion*, when even this state of freedom *qua* the most proper mode of being is still determined by providence and is thus subject to an intelligible power-structure? Plotinus does not see any problem here. On the contrary, to Plotinus, to be subject to this intelligible environment is evidently a guarantee of liberty."

the most essential reason why Plotinus declares man to be a beautiful creature (*poiêma*, III.2.9.28-29).

One passage in Plotinus might seem to exclude the possibility of such interpretation altogether (II.3.13.34-40):

> So then living things are all conformed to the complete pattern (*logon*) of the All, both the ones in heaven (*en ouranôi*) and the rest which have been made parts in the whole, and no part (*ouden tôn merôn*), even if it is a great one, has power to bring about a complete change in the patterns or the things which happen according to the patterns. It can bring about a non-essential alteration in either direction, for better or worse, but it cannot make anything abandon its own proper nature (*oikeias phûseôs*).

Whereas the passage does not confirm the interpretation, it certainly does not exclude it either. For when the One within the human soul becomes identical with the One, it is no longer a part. On the contrary, it has reached its own proper nature.

Now, unifications with Soul, Intellect and the One are, respectively, steps towards relatively higher degrees of freedom (III.2.10.13-19, VI.8.7.1-3, VI.8.12.17-22).[258] In Plotinus, those higher degrees of freedom are a basic experience of ascent. Intellect is, for instance, self-determining in relation to Soul (VI.8.6.6-45), but is after all itself determined by the One (VI.8.7.3-4), including the sense of determination by what one really needs (VI.8.2.19-21). Like the will of anything else, therefore, Intellect's "will is directed to the Good (*hê gar boulêsis thelei to agathon*)", but for Intellect especially, its "truthful thought is in the Good" (VI.8.6.39) for, again, like everything else, it needs the One (V.3.11.12-14, cf. *Republic* 505e, 509b).[259] Reason (*logos*) stemming from Intellect is then presented as free in one context as opposed to the passions (III.1.9.9-16, cf. VI.8.1.22-30). In other contexts Intellect is presented as determined by the One, simply because everything other than the One is determined by it. Intellect itself is, for instance, sent by law (IV.3.13.22-24), for the One is "necessity itself and law for everything else" (VI.8.10.34-35). At the

258. As distinct from Vacherot (1846) 477, who says Intellect is "le type suprême de la liberté". Cf. the excellent analysis by Henry (1931) 202-03, 207, 215 or the generally quite good and brief introduction to VI.8 by Beierwaltes (1990) xxix-xlii. The designation "relative freedom" is mine, however.

259. According to Armstrong's emendation of the text of V.3.11.13-14 in his 1984 translation, cf. note 40 above.

same time, the One is exceptionally "absolute freedom" (VI.8.8.1-3, VI.8.15.19, VI.8.20.31-34, VI.8.21.30-34). So in the One, paradoxically, the highest degree of necessity and the highest degree of freedom coalesce. It seems to exhibit the most deeply connected compatibilism concerning freedom and necessity. Is this only a superficial paradox or a real self-contradiction?

II.C.3. Two concepts of necessity

In his discussion of the intricate relation between freedom and necessity carried out especially in treatise VI.8, Plotinus presents us with the illustrative metaphor of being the master of something as similar to freedom. The metaphor of master and slave is very usefully employed to elucidate the problem from VI.8.1.25 onwards, but most significantly put forward to signify the very issue of investigation in VI.8.7.26-28 (cf. *Phaedo* 79e-80a, *First Alcibiades* 122a, *Parmenides* 133d-134a, 134d and *Philebus* 27a):

> […] our notion (*hê epinoia*) wants to contemplate what among beings is a slave of others and what has absolute freedom (*to autexousion*) and what is not subject to another but itself master (*kûrion*) of its actuality […].

As already acknowledged, Intellect is, for instance, the master of Soul, while the One is master of Intellect, and so the master of everything, "having all things as slaves" (VI.8.16.10). In contrast to Intellect, the One is not master of itself, though (cf. II.3.9.24-26). The reason given by Plotinus is important, for it would "in a way (*pôs*)" introduce a duality into the One between subject – its actuality (*energeia*) as it were – and object – its substance (*ousia*, VI.8.12.28-37) as it were, like, for instance, the self-intellection that distinguishes the Forms of Intellect (III.9.1.10-20, V.3.8.21-22 & 35-40, V.3.5.19-48).[260] This duality could not be sustained, for while Intellect is only unified, the One is pure Unity.

The One being pure Unity is the same reason why the One cannot be its own cause, *causa sui* (VI.8.7.25-26). For, as we have already seen above,

260. As distinct from Henry (1931), who thinks that the Aristotelian terms substance (*ousia*) and actuality (*energeia*) are identical in the Plotinian Intellect. They are not, for in his Platonic terms they become distinguished in Intellect as the Forms Being and Motion.

Plotinus refers to and agrees with both the Platonic *Greater Hippias* (297a) and Aristotle in *On the Movement of Animals* (700a35-700b3), that the One would then have to be before its own creation (VI.8.20.1-4 & 15-17, cf. V.6.3.15-16), i.e. an infinite regress would arise starting with another One (VI.8.7.31-32). Plotinus explicitly warns us that the language of duality will not pertain to the One, although it might be necessary for the sake of persuasion as he says in VI.8.12.2-3, VI.8.13.1-5 & 47-50, cf. in other treatises also VI.7.40.2-5 and V.3.6.8-12. I cite the latter passage:

> Has then our argument demonstrated something of a kind which has the power to inspire confidence? No, it has necessity, not persuasive force; for necessity is in Intellect but persuasion in the Soul. It does seem that we seek to persuade ourselves rather than to behold Truth by pure Intellect.

It is explicitly only in a persuasive way of speaking, namely to distinguish the One from any coincidence, that Plotinus talks as if the One had chosen Itself and is, as it were (*hoion*), a "master of Himself" or "ruling Himself" (*archôn heautou*, VI.8.20.28). The persuasive reason is that choice and even arbitrariness will have a relatively higher modal necessity in comparison with apparently pure coincidence (VI.8.13.22 & 58-59, VI.8.15.8-10, VI.8.16.17-24 & 38). This is the main reason why Plotinus speaks as if – but only "as if" – God had chosen Himself (*hoion eboulêthê autos*, VI.8.18.48-50).[261] In reality, however, the One is "'ruling' only (*'archôn' monon*)" (VI.8.20.29, cf. *Phaedo* 80a).

As observed above, at least some part of human power or freedom is said by Plotinus (IV.8.5.3-4) to be contained by necessity.[262] This sounds like the Stoic view[263] – and one that comes quite close to a very common Humean-Strawsonian compatibilist, commonsensical view of today – according to which it would not matter much whether all of that power would, in the end, be determined wholly by, for instance, the necessity of the One. For, reflecting a point in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (1153b16-19), it would seem only to diminish freedom if that power suffered impediments by an exterior necessity such as physical force.[264] For a further philosophical investigation, it does matter, however. The question is clearly whether freedom and neces-

261. Another reason is presented in section 'II.C.5. The absolute Self' below.
262. Cf. section 'I.B.6. *In-esse* and determinism'.
263. Cf. Graeser (1972) 112, referring to Whittaker (1928) 76.
264. Hume (1772) 148-64: 158-59, 164, Strawson (1962) 205, 211 & *passim*.

sity are not wholly contradictory, incompatible,[265] and whether freedom after all is a completely empty word giving way to pure determinism (III.1.7.8-21, cf. VI.8.7.16-22).

First, Plotinus discusses an argument for the voluntarist view of the One, a view that – apparently – strongly emphasises the freedom of the One by presenting it as a *causa sui*. However, such a Neopythagorean or Judeo-Christian "bold suggestion (*tolmêros logos*)" that the One is absolutely free in the sense of self-causing and could only be there by coincidence, if it was not self-causing, cannot be true.[266] It would be "absurd (*aporos*)" says Plotinus (VI.8.7.11-19).

265. Without too much discussion, Henry (1931) 68, 69, 77-78, 211, 339 thinks they must be incompatible, and that Plotinus finally should be considered a "pantheist", i.e. a determinist in the Stoic and Spinozistic sense, contrary to the indeterminist acquittal of Plotinus for "pantheism" by Arnou (1921a) 184, Bréhier (1948b) 11 – and later again by Cilento (1963) 98 and Dihle (1982) 116. Westra (2002a) 145 is a compatibilist as regards freedom and necessity of the Plotinian One, but an incompatibilist indeterminist as regards freedom and necessity of the human self, although she apparently considers this self as not identical with the One but belonging to the stage of Intellect, and at the same time (p. 132) refers to the concord of Intellect and necessity in III.2.2.33-34. Unfortunately, her interpretation does not solve these contradictions and, consequently, it becomes self-contradictory.

    Henry (1931) 211 writes on Plotinus' apparent compatibilism between freedom and necessity: "Cette grave confusion est due, pensons-nous, à des raisons d'ordre historique, occasions plutôt que causes, et à des raisons d'ordre théorique, celles-ci à peine conscientes." As will soon appear, I think that from his interpretative point of departure here, Henry diminishes too rashly the philosophical genius of Plotinus.

    Clark (1943) 20, 31 confirms the deterministic interpretation of Henry: "It must be admitted that there are a few hesitant passages; the theory itself, however, is thoroughly deterministic." The same is the case in Amand (1945) 159, Boot (1984) 480, Blumenthal (1987) 559 and in A.C. Lloyd (1990) 98: "All freedom is Spinozistic freedom." Amand correctly affirms that there is no place for literal contingency in Plotinus, but he mistakenly thinks that this makes him a thorough determinist. Leroux (1996) 292, 294, 298, 304 mainly repeats Henry's deterministic interpretation of Plotinus but from the viewpoint of necessity allowing for compatibility with freedom, especially p. 296 relying on IV.8.5.3-4 having universal significance for something much more than human souls at a certain stage. This happens although he at the same time pp. 293, 296, 312 adheres to an opposite voluntarist interpretation of the One itself as self-caused, *causa sui*. I am arguing that Plotinus dismisses these interpretations.

266. Cilento (1963) 115 thinks that "the bold suggestion" is Gnostic, because the concept of boldness (*tolma*) was used by the Gnostics and because Plotinus elsewhere argued against them, cf. II.9.11.21-22. This is not a convincing argument on its own, for, as we have seen above in VI.9.10.13-14, Plotinus at one point offers a "bold suggestion (*tolmêros logos*)" which he proves to be correct. Though Cilento could be right in another way, for the Neopythagorean doctrine of self-causation was transmitted by Gnostics like the Simonians as appears from Hippolytus' *Refutation of all Heresies* VI.17.3, cf. Krämer (1964) 399. →

The suggestion does not really over-emphasise the significance of freedom; it is simply a mistake concerning what freedom means.

His argument against any self-causation of the absolute is at the same time an argument against any self-determination of the absolute and vice versa. For a lack of self-determination does not have to mean a lack of freedom, on the contrary. Self-determination is nonsense when it comes to the absolute,[267] or, as is said in the *Republic* (430e-431a):

> Yet isn't the expression "self-control (*kreittô hautou*)" ridiculous? The stronger self that does the controlling is the same as the weaker self that gets controlled, so that only the same Self (*ho autos*) is referred to in all such expressions.

If the absolute were self-determining, it would mean that the absolute could become something less than the absolute and so become something other than itself, the absolute (VI.8.7.36-37). The absolute, however, must by necessity be itself (VI.8.10.24-25). For it would be a lack of absolute power – and so of absolute freedom – if the absolute power were only there by coincidence and so could happen not to be there at all (VI.8.7.32-46, VI.8.9.1-10, cf. VI.8.10.32-34). It would also contradict the other passages where Plotinus argues for and affirms the One as absolutely self-sufficient.[268]

→ The same argument applies to the emphasis of Whittaker (1980) on the influence of Gnostic self-generating principles on Plotinus.

Armstrong (1982) conjectures instead that Plotinus here refers to a Judeo-Christian proposal. Although it could just as well be a reference to the Neopythagoreans as suggested above in section 'II.A.2. *Causa sui* or *ratio sui*?', Armstrong's suggestion might simultaneously be true. It is quite another thing to claim as does Rist (1982) 99, 108, 111-12 that the mentioned proposal was what made Plotinus write treatise VI.8 and, in conjunction with the voluntarist interpretation of VI.8 in Trouillard (1955a) 77, 79 – referred to in Trouillard (1974) 13-14 as the opposite of Spinozism – and in Rist (1967) 66, 82-83, to suggest that its conclusion is remarkably similar to Judeo-Christian voluntarism. The latter inference is definitely incorrect.

267. Krämer (1964) 401 is wrong to take the hypothetical suggestion of the One as an "auf sich selbst bezogene innere 'Mächtigkeit'" seriously as Plotinus' own proposal. Also Beierwaltes (1999) 197, 199 takes the self-relations seriously, even when he admits that they are all founded on the hypothesis of self-causation of the One. Although he also admits (p. 201) that "Selbstzwang" would not do for the One, he does not consider that the hypothesis of self-determination and so of the One as a *causa sui* – which indeed would involve self-coercion – is basically misleading according to Plotinus.

268. As distinct from A.C. Lloyd (1990) 98: "[…] the existence of every level of reality below the One is necessary, not contingent" – if it is here implied by Lloyd that the One itself should be contingent.

This is not at all the same as determinism in the sense that the One itself could be predetermined, as appears from the following consideration. Most incompatibilists in their postulation of a complete opposition between freedom and necessity do not distinguish between two very different kinds of necessity of which only one essentially contradicts freedom, while the other is in fact presupposed by it. If these two senses are confused, we get, for instance, the "bold" – and in this case wrong – "suggestion" (VI.8.7.11-15) that absolute freedom without self-determination could be a matter of coincidence only. The alternative to voluntarism suggesting self-causation of the absolute is equally absurd. It is the determinist solution according to which, as we shall see in the next section, a "coincidental necessity" – a contradiction in terms – would happen to determine freedom.

For necessity can mean either (actively) to determine or (passively) to be determined.[269] God is absolutely necessary as a determinant and not as determined (VI.8.9.10-13, VI.8.10.35-37). So this is the way Plotinus understands the words of Plato's favourite poet Simonides quoted in the *Protagoras* (345d) and referred to in the *Laws* (741a, 818b): that even God cannot struggle against – i.e. avoid – necessity (fr. 542.29-30). The One "is not held fast by necessity", Plotinus similarly writes (VI.8.10.34) – not "held fast" by any necessity outside of itself, as the One Being is according to Parmenides (DK 28B8.30-31). Instead, the One is necessity itself (VI.8.10.34-35). This is simply because the One is necessary as determinant but not as determined.[270] For the One is necessarily there as self-sufficient.

The necessary pair of notions of determinant and determined is apparent in Plotinus, when he often, and especially throughout VI.8, metaphorically speaks of the relation between master and slave.[271] We should not become

269. The two senses of necessity in Plotinus reckoned by Leroux (1996) 292-93 as respectively "pre-eminent" and "lower" necessity could incidentally both be considered necessities of being determined, i.e. determinism, especially because Leroux (1996) 293, 296, 312 considers the pre-eminent necessity a matter of "self-causation", i.e. of the One as a *causa sui* or an absolute self-determinant. Cf. further discussion below.

270. Cf. Gollwitzer (1902) 47.

271. Unfortunately, Weismann (1997) 1171, 1182, 1184, 1197 does not specify sufficiently which kind of necessity – the necessity as determinant or determined – is implied by freedom. It is only the first kind. He subsequently contradicts himself p. 1175 by denying the One any necessity. However, on p. 1177 he rightly implies that necessity of the One by distinguishing the freedom of the One from arbitrariness, while he pp. 1180, 1184, according to my view, mistakenly, denies any necessity of human souls consequently being determined accordingly by the One. Cf. (next) note 272 below.

slaves to our passive desires (e.g., III.2.8.9-13, II.9.9.11-14). The Atomists for instance, make the mistake of letting Beings, i.e. universals, become slaves to sensible necessity (III.1.2.15-17), when according to Plotinus it is really the other way around. To speak of enslavement or corresponding mastery presupposes a relation between something that determines and something that is determined (cf. VI.8.4.22-24, VI.8.2.19-21). The One is necessary as determinant, determiner or master, while everything else is necessary as determined or enslaved (III.1.2.30-38). These make two very opposite concepts of necessity that are themselves necessarily interrelated:

1. the necessity of a determinant (the necessity of self-sufficiency)

2. the necessity of being determined (the necessity of determinism).

The second sense of necessity is derived from the first sense, since it is the same relation as between cause and effect or activity and passivity. Activity and passivity are opposite yet both necessary aspects of the same (single) motion; aspects, which are exposed by Plotinus, for instance, in VI.3.28.1-4, cf. *Theaetetus* (156a-b, 157a) – a highly important passage we will soon come back to after dealing with Plotinus' dismissal of strict determinism,[272] similar to his dismissal of absolute self-causation.

272. Cf. Combès (1969) 321, who without employing these words, but instead "l'exigence" and "la nécessité", after all deals with the same concepts, observing that "La nécessité est le négatif de l'exigence", i.e. that passivity is negative activity. His distinction conceals in this way, however, the modal necessity of activity, i.e. that there are two opposed necessities of determinant and determined. Still, he equates "l'exigence" (through Latin being the exact translation of Greek *exousia*) with freedom, and concludes: "À la différence de la nécessité stoïcienne, la nécessité plotinienne n'est donc pas ontologiquement antérieure à la liberté: elle est seconde." Despite some signs pp. 308, 317 to promise the human soul attainment of absolute freedom, Combès (1969) 318-19, 324 underscores the absolute distance, which only allows for a vision of and in that sense only a contact with the absolute freedom of the One. He does not consider the problem in Plotinus that what he reckons as the "activity" of ascent itself must be some kind of determined necessity, i.e. really a passivity as well resulting from the activity of the One.

II.C.4. Determinism put into perspective

Plotinus' argumentation against any self-causation of the One is paradoxically quite similar to his argument against any strict determinism proposing that determinism would be valid for the One as well. This latter suggestion is as "absurd (*atopon*)" as the former, since it would deny freedom even to God. It would suggest that the One is also determined, namely by chance or Fortune (*kata tûchên*) just happening to be what it is, itself (VI.8.4.10-11, VI.8.7.32-36, VI.8.8.19-27, VI.8.9.1-37, VI.8.10.1-18, VI.8.11.33-37, VI.8.13.22 & 58-59, VI.8.14.14-16 & 35-42, VI.8.15.10-33, VI.8.16.17-24, VI.8.17.12-18, VI.8.18.30-32 & 37, VI.8.19.6-7 & 15, VI.9.5.1-3).

If then God could not be free, but would so to speak be enslaved by Himself, human souls would not be free either (VI.8.1.1-22, cf. VI.8.3.1-2), since our kind of freedom could in any case only be derived from His (VI.8.7.3-10).[273] This position is equivalent to the over-all determinism of prominent Stoics. If thorough determinists were right, however, any self-determination, for instance, would be a mere word (III.1.7.13-15).

Fortunately, the deterministic interpretation of the absolute fails on its own grounds, for by introducing the duality of something determining something else (cf. VI.8.4.22-24), an infinite regress into the One would be introduced, similar to the infinite regress of the self-determination of a *causa sui* and exactly the same as the one Aristotle in the *Physics* (257a31-258b9) envisaged in Plato's account of the self-motion of the soul.[274] The deterministic suggestion would again in a way put self-causation or "self-enslavement" at the top of the hierarchy, with the same absurd infinite regress resulting again. It cannot be true then (VI.8.21.30-33).

The strict determinists simply reverse cause and effect, presenting the very determinant as determined. For if the One was itself by chance, this chance would, paradoxically, have to be determined itself from something else and so on (VI.8.8.24-27), since any chance, fortune or coincidence by definition could only pertain to something secondary, i.e. to something that is really determined by something else (VI.8.7.32-36). As in the case of the argument against the suggestion of a *causa sui*, another determinant, another 'One' so to speak, would have to be introduced into infinity (cf. VI.8.7.31-32). However,

273. Cf. Henry (1931) 186, 337 and Benz (1932) 297-98.
274. Cf. section 'I.C.2. The One within' above.

unlike even Intellect, the One cannot be determined by itself or by anything else (VI.8.4.29-32) for it simply is itself (VI.8.10.18-32). This is in contrast to anything else, which is also something else besides itself (VI.8.21.30-33). The reason is that everything else is not unified and is not pure Unity as is the One (VI.6.1.19-20, V.3.15.10-16). The argument relies on the tautological sense of the One, i.e. pure Unity. The One is the pure Self.

II.C.5. The absolute Self

Since the One is absolutely self-sufficient, it must have corresponding absolute power (VI.8.10.32-34, VI.8.21.3-5, V.5.10.21, VI.9.6.7-8, II.9.3.5-7, IV.8.6.11) – according to Plotinus' reading of the *Sophist* (247d-e, 248c) – and therefore be the most causative (*aitiôtaton*) reason (*aitia*) for everything (VI.8.18.38-39).[275] The common notion is 'absolute' or 'itself' (*auto* in the neuter).[276] It is not just a coincidental play on words from hypothesis I of the *Parmenides* (141e) when Plotinus says in passing (V.3.12.50-52):

> […] that is One without the thing; for if it is one thing it would not be the One Itself (*autoen*); for 'self (*auto*)' comes before being 'something (*ti*)'.

The connection between, for instance, the absolute necessity and the absolute power and freedom of the One is strictly a matter of selfhood, which we have already found in Plotinus to be intrinsically just another word for partlessness, indivisibility, individuality or absolute Unity. Plotinus explains (VI.7.37.29-31):

> For He is Himself sufficient (*arkei gar autos*) and does not have to seek anything but Himself above all beings; for He suffices for Himself (*arkei gar autôi*) and all else by being the Self, which He is (*ôn autos ho estin*).

275. As distinct from Graeser (1972) 118: "Admittedly, the question whether, for example, *aitia autotelês* is equivalent to what the Neoplatonist would take *archê autexousious* to mean is nowhere answered."
276. Ferwerda (1965) 83 and Ferwerda (1980) 40 point to the metaphorical significance of Plotinus writing sometimes *autos* as the masculine personal pronoun for the neuter "One".

Plotinus is then addressing the problem set out in the *First Alcibiades* (129b, 130d), quoted above,[277] that the interest should focus not on the particular self but instead on the Self Itself, the absolute Self (*auto to auto*). In his description of the ascent to the One, he confirms in a very subtle way what Socrates says in the *Republic* (438a-b):

> But it seems to me that, in the case of all things that are related to something, those that are of a particular sort (*poia atta*) are related to something particular (*poiou tinos*), while those that are each themselves (*ta d'auta hekasta*) are related to a thing, which is just the Self of each (*autou hekastou monon*).

A passive selfhood of the One would not explain its absolute freedom. The absolute having a 'passive selfhood' would simply be a contradiction in terms, for Plotinus considers everything either an activity or passivity as in the *Sophist* (247d-e, 248c). Since any passivity must be the effect of an activity, cf. *Theaetetus* (156a-b, 157a), a 'passive selfhood' would not be enough to preserve the self from being determined from something else in so far as it exists at all (III.1.4.12-28, III.1.5.15-24 & 28-33, cf. VI.1.19.8-12, VI.1.22.1-8). The self could not then fulfil one of the two criteria for human freedom mentioned in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (1109b1-1110a4, 1111a22-24), and it could definitely not fulfil the single criterion for freedom as such mentioned in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (982b26):

> […] free is what is for its own sake and not for the sake of something else (*eleutheros ho hautou heneka kai mê allou ôn*).

For Plotinus (cf. VI.1.21.11-16), it would consequently mean that the Unmoved Mover in Aristotle could not be considered free in so far as it is only a passive object of desire, cf. *Physics* (202a13-14) and *Metaphysics* (1072b3-5, 1073a23-34).

The absolute Self of Plotinus' One must be an absolute activity instead. In VI.8.4.32-34 we hear that Intellect is not determined from anything – below itself – and this will pre-eminently be true of the One without any sort of qualification. Any selfhood must essentially be an activity to encompass what Plotinus often refers to also as the human self's immediate experience of freedom – i.e. activity – in its ascent. Because it is an activity, it must imply motion,

277. In section 'I.C.2. The One within'.

since motion is the link between any activity and any passivity according to Plotinus' reading (VI.1.20.10-14, cf., e.g., IV.4.35.62-64, VI.1.22.1-5) of Plato's *Theaetetus* (156a-b, 157a). Absolute selfhood must imply absolute motion (cf. V.2.2.8-10, IV.7.12.1-8).

When Plotinus for the sake of persuasion, for instance, operates with a will of the One and at one point even says that the One could not be distinguished from its will (VI.8.20.28-29, VI.8.21.16), the intention in the context is not, as we have seen above,[278] to make the One a voluntarist God of arbitrariness separate from self-sufficient reason (cf. VI.8.9.45-48), but instead to emphasise the will's definite aspect of activity as a pre-eminent characteristic of the One. There is no distinction between a subject and an object in the One. There could be no passivity, potentiality or object, but (VI.8.4.22-29) only an activity, power, actuality or subject (*auto*), the Self, because, as he states (VI.8.20.26-27):

> […] making (*to pepoiêkenai*) and Self (*auto*) are concurrent […].

A quite similar statement is presented in V.3.10.3-4:

> The primary principle, then, and the making principle (*to poioun*) must be one (*hen amphô*) […].

While other seeming activities are after all only effects and therefore passivities of the One's power or activity, the One's activity or rather creation is independent or absolute (*apolûton tên poiêsin autou*, VI.8.20.6).[279] *Apolûtos* is a rare word in Plotinus, which has a highly significant appearance in the wording of the very conclusion of treatises VI.1-3, reducing the Aristotelian and Stoic categories (VI.3.28.1-4):

278. Cf. section 'II.A.3. Plotinus interpreting the *Euthyphro*' above.

279. Noticed also by Müller (1914) 486, Marrucchi (1935) 169, 173, 175, and Boussoulas (1976), cf. section 'I.C.5. Unity or plurality first?' above. The dismissive assessments of Marrucchi (1935) given by Salmona (1967) 120 and Leroux (1990) 220 appear consequently premature. The latter writes: "Des expressions hasardeuses, laissant entendre que la philosophie de Plotin est une philosophie de la création (p. 169), la mention de l'action créatrice (p. 173), introduisent dans l'interprétation du traité une perspective qui en est absolument absente." Marrucchi (1935) 173 writes: "Per parte mia, non temo di affermare che Plotino è stato il primo grande *metafisico della creazione, principio radicale di tutte le cose.*" Whether Marrucchi is right here depends upon whether "creation" presupposes self-determination of the creator. According to Plotinus it does not.

> It has been said that activity (*to poiein*) and passivity (*to paschein*) are to be called movements (*kinêseis*), and one can say that some movements are independent (*apolûtous*), some makings (*poiêseis*), and some sufferings (*peiseis*). And it has been said about the other so-called genera that they are to be referred to these.

The conclusion is not unexpected at this point, for motion in general and independent motion in particular have been referred to throughout the whole categorical work, so as for instance *kinêseis […] par' autôn […] apolelûmenas* in VI.1.19.5-13, *kinêsin tên apolûton par hautou* in VI.1.22.1-5, and *hê apolûtos kinêsis* in VI.1.22.21.

A comparison of the relation between the only seeming contraries of freedom and necessity with the relation between the only seeming contraries of motion and immobility is highly revealing. For in the One, absolute motion and absolute immobility coincide (V.1.6.23-27, V.3.10.16-22, III.2.4.13-14, V.5.10.14-17, II.4.5.30-31, VI.9.3.42-44, VI.9.6.44-45).[280] This is not at all unintelligible. For absolute motion to be absolute, indeed, it must come from what is absolutely immobile (cf. VI.8.7.42-46, I.4.6.17-19). As is fleetingly indicated (IV.4.26.8-9), Plotinus has simply interpreted the physical suggestion of Archimedes of the *pou stô* as only to be satisfied metaphysically, and only by the Platonic One.[281] This is what Plotinus refers to as the ultimate Self.

So in the One itself, opposites that are only seemingly opposites, coincide: motion and immobility, freedom and necessity, selfhood and selfishness.

280. Cf. my preliminary study, Ousager (1996) 109.

281. Cf. Pappus *Collection* VIII, xi, p. 1060: "Give me a place to stand and I shall move the earth (*Dos moi pou stô kai kinô tên gên*)" – as distinct from Bussanich (1994) 5305, for although Plotinus does not speak from an Archimedean viewpoint, he certainly speaks about it.

This is an argument against the interpretation of Daunas (1848) 155-66, who criticises Plotinus for thinking that absorption into the One means immobility in the sense of inactivity of the soul, cf. 149-150 n. 1: "Conséquemment, Plotin conclut que la force motrice n'est pas essentielle à l'être humain." On the contrary, Plotinus is fully aware that the immobility attained in the One is at once an Archimedean *pou stô* of absolute motion and therefore also an Archimedean point for absolute human activity. That is the essential ground for unification as the pure consequence of unity and selfhood. Daunas is then rather guilty of the confusion he ascribes to Plotinus: "[…] une vie impersonnelle et sans conscience dans un être actif et intelligent, est une contradiction; et l'hypothèse d'une existence particulière tout en Dieu, sans rapport à l'humanité et hors de la nature, n'est qu'une confusion puérile."

Concerning the latter opposition for instance, the egoism and selfishness – or boldness (*tolma*) – of the human soul will only be satisfied by selfhood and union with its true Self, the One (VI.8.13.20-21).[282] That is why the love of the One after all must be greater than particular self-love (VI.8.13.11-14 & 43-47, VI.8.15.1-2, cf. Plotinus' subtle, indirect reading of the *Philebus* in VI.7.24.26-28).

The goal to be achieved by the *spoudaios* – the excellent, proactive man – is the waking up of the particular soul (III.5.5.10-16) and intellect (III.2.5.18-19) to attain the wakefulness of the One (cf. VI.8.16.30-35). Here, absolute alertness of the soul is reached (IV.4.45.35-38, IV.9.2.3-24, cf. *Charmides* 159c-160d, *Cratylus* 400a, 415c-d, *Theaetetus* 153a-c). Wakefulness is a designation for the point of absolute motion, for Motion is a Form that is "awake (*egrêgoros*)" (VI.3.22.13, VI.3.23.1-5). Plotinus uses an Aristotelian term from the *Metaphysics* (1072b17), where it is said that wakefulness is, among things, most pleasant and therefore ascribable to God. Actually, however, he relegates (cf. VI.2.8.7) this term in Aristotle to Heraclitean and Platonic patterns of thought. In the *Timaeus* (52b-c), for instance, "sleepless" Being (cf. VI.6.10.1-2, II.5.3.36, DK 22B89) is distinguished from the "dream" of sensible nature (cf. IV.3.10.32-33, III.8.4.22-25, V.5.11.19-22, III.6.6.65-76), and in the *Republic* (534c-d) the utter failure of the human soul is described as "falling asleep" (cf. IV.3.10.35-36, I.8.13.25-26, II.3.18.8, V.5.11.19-22). Man's particular Form or guardian spirit is always awake, whether the particular man happens to be bodily asleep or not (I.4.9.2-7, cf. *Symposium* 203a, DK 22B26, 73, 89, 1, 63). Plotinus himself was said to be "sleeplessly" alert by Apollo's oracle (*VP* 22.40-44), and Porphyry construed this sleeplessness (*VP* 23.3-4 & 21-24) to be his striving towards the One, corresponding to what Plotinus reveals (VI.9.3.24, cf. VI.7.22.33-36), that one must be awake to receive the One seen. It is only an apparent contradiction, when this goal is at the same time described (III.8.6.39) as Quietude, cf. *Parmenides* (162e). For that is only a variation of the doctrine that in the One, absolute motion and absolute immobility must coincide.

282. As distinct from Leroux (1996) 304, who thinks that the true self is within Intellect and that there can be no immediate contact with the absolute freedom of the One.

II.C.6. Self-determination, self-causation and self-motion

When it comes to descriptions as to whether Plotinus adheres to determinism or to (voluntarist) libertarianism, and, furthermore, whether he is a compatibilist or a non-compatibilist regarding these two options, very different senses of compatibilism are usually confused.

Plotinus is a non-compatibilist as regards absolute freedom and determinism, for the absolute determinant – the One or the Self – cannot be determined itself and cannot then be self-determined either. On the other hand, he is a compatibilist as regards absolute freedom and the necessity of self-sufficiency and a compatibilist as regards relative freedom and the necessity of determinism. Corresponding to the previous distinction drawn above between two opposite, yet interrelated, senses of necessity,[283] we get two opposite, yet interrelated, senses of compatibilism in Plotinus:

1*. compatibility of absolute freedom with the necessity of a determinant (the necessity of self-sufficiency)

2*. compatibility of relative freedom with the necessity of being determined (the necessity of determinism).

The necessity of being determined includes what Plotinus optimistically describes as self-determination – as opposed to the pessimistic suggestions of everyone's "self-enslavement" following from strict determinism. Again, the second sense of compatibilism of freedom and necessity is derived from the first sense, as an effect from its cause or as a passivity from its related activity.

Deterministic compatibilism, saying that freedom, for instance, only demands that one is not hindered by anything physical from the outside (cf. III.1.10.15), could not justify that relative freedom ultimately must be relative to absolute freedom. For on the determinist compatibilist account (2*) alone, absolute freedom could not exist. According to Plotinus, a consistent Platonic notion of relative freedom demands instead that absolute freedom must be prior and real even beyond the world of Intellect and its Forms.[284]

283. Cf. section 'II.C.3. Two concepts of necessity' above.
284. Cf. Combès (1969) 322: "Le plotinisme est une philosophie de la liberté créatrice de la nécessité dans son rapport à l'UN, qui est le fondement transcendant de la liberté et du tout."

Let us take a closer look at the relation between the absolute Self and other selves, starting with the absolute Self. The One cannot determine itself, because that would introduce the infinite regress of the *causa sui*. An axiological argument from the notion of the Good as synonymous with the One is presented by Plotinus in addition to show that self-determination would imply that the One could become something better than it is, which is impossible (VI.8.7.36-42, VI.8.21.1-7) according to Aristotle's definition of "what is up to us" in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1113b7-14). The henological order of things is ultimately the reason why, since the reason for Goodness is the self-sufficient reason of Unity, which is its own reason and therefore the cause of the Good for anything else. So the One cannot become better than it is, being Itself. As we have already seen,[285] for the absolute power it is similarly not a deficiency of power not to be able to become worse (VI.8.9.1-10, VI.8.10.28-34, VI.8.21.1-7). On the contrary, for if it by any means became different than itself, a loss of power would result.

In contrast to the Stoics, Plotinus redefined *to autexousion* not as absolute self-determination but as absolute freedom, i.e. absolute power or *autê exousia* in the neuter. In contrast to Stoics and Aristotelians *to autexousion* is employed by Plotinus without presupposing the power as the power *over* something. Power over something was conceived by them as first of all a power over oneself, i.e. as self-determination, cf. Epictetus *Discourses* (I.25.2, IV.1.62 & 68, IV.7.16, IV.12.8) and *Handbook* (1).[286] This is the reason why Plotinus underscores that the One is not ruling something but "ruling only" (VI.8.20.29). The Aristotelian Alexander of Aphrodisias' blaming of other philosophers in *On Fate* (CLXXXII.22-24, CLXXXIX.9-11) for not understanding that *to autexousion* and *to eph' hêmin* are simply the same thing has probably presented an immediate occasion for a reaction from Plotinus in VI.8.[287] He must have considered Alexander's charge quite thoughtless, because according to Plotinus, self-determination (*to eph' hêmin*) is, on the contrary, neither the same as free will (*to hekousion*) nor absolute freedom (*to autexousion*).[288] If

285. Cf. section 'II.A.3. Plotinus interpreting the *Euthyphro*' above.
286. Cf. Bobzien (1998a) 82 n. 48, 86 n. 59, Bobzien (1998b) 166.
287. Cf. the presentation of the Stoic views in Bobzien (1998b) 166-67.
288. Cf. Henry (1931) 186, 337 and as distinct from the 1988 translation of VI.8 by Armstrong, who in several places misleadingly translates both *to hekousion* and *to autexousion* with "self-determination", in his 1966 translation of *to autexousion* in I.4.8.9 with "self-disposal" and in Armstrong (1982) 400 *to autexousion* with "self-disposal" and "self-command", equated by Graeser (1972) 123 with "self-determination" and rendered by Kremer (1981b) 47 as "Selbstbestimmung" and by Dihle (1982) 116 n. 78, 225 as "freedom

it were, it would again mean – absurdly – that freedom implied the ultimate Self of the One becoming someone else (VI.8.7.36-37).

The choosing (*hairesin*) and the willing of itself (*tên hautou thelêsin*) occasionally ascribed to the One in VI.8.13.14-24 & 43-47 are basically a matter of pedagogical persuasion to help the readers understand the relation. If we are to use such persuasive words that introduce duality into the One, however, the One's choice of and willing itself will be necessary. Only in so far as (*hoion*) it has a will or choice (*hoion eboulêthê*, VI.8.18.49, cf. the important qualifications following right after, in VI.8.18.52-53) it wills and chooses itself. Still, its will does not change it (VI.8.21.16-19). For the Self – absolute Unity – is prior.[289]

Instead of the One being a self-determinant, the Self of the One must then be the very measure for all self-determinants (cf. VI.8.18.2-3, III.7.12.37-39, I.8.2.5, I.8.3.26-27, VI.1.6.11, VI.7.33.16-20, V.5.4.13-14, V.5.11.2-3). Rather than just endorsing the reflection thereof from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (1087b33-1088a8), Plotinus here draws upon Plato's discussion of Protagoras' doctrine of man as the measure of everything in the *Protagoras* (356d-357b), the *Theaetetus* (152a) and the *Cratylus* (385e-386a), and agrees with Plato that not man, but God – which Plotinus ultimately identifies with the One – is the measure, cf. *Laws* (716c).[290]

Consequently, any relative freedom of self-determination is derived from the absolute freedom of the One (VI.8.7.3-10).[291] Plotinus then answers his

→ of choice". Those were instead correct translations of the derived notion, *to eph' hêmin*. Also, Graeser (1972) 117 reverses the relation between self-determination and free will, cf. similar points about the relation of choice (*boulêsis*) to free will (*to hekousion*) in O'Brien (1977) 405-07 and the objection of Bobzien (1998b) 139 to translations of *to eph' hêmin* as "free-will". Weismann (1997) 1185 confuses *autexousios* with *auto-ekousios*, which he translates as the capacity of personal freedom, i.e. of self-determination. The word *autekousion* – which I would translate as "(capacity of) free will itself" – does not occur in Plotinus. The translation by Crocker (1956) 31 of *to eph' hêmin* as "self-disposal" and *to autexousion* as "independence" is not too bad, but he is not right that "Properly, the *to eph' hêmin* refers to the reasoning, while the *autexousion* refers to the desire."

289. Although I consider the final determinist interpretation of Henry (1931) and the voluntarist interpretation of Rist (1967) equally wrong, I think that the voluntarist postulate of Rist (1967) 82-83 that the One is as it is "because it has willed to be so" is already fully overruled by essential elements in the more careful analysis of Henry (1931). The priority of the Self is even logically implied in the formulation of Rist (1967) 83: "it concerns itself with itself."

290. Cf. Beierwaltes (2002) 127.

291. Cf. Bréhier (1948b) 8, as distinct from the deterministic compatibilism of Leroux (1996) 298: "Human existence is the site of authentic freedom: a freedom the exercise of which leads back to the transcendental necessity of the Good."

question from the outset of treatise VI.8, that human self-determination is not transferable to the One (VI.8.1.16-21). On the other hand, man can occasionally attain absolute freedom.

In a sarcastic commentary on Aristotle's categories (VI.1.21-22), Plotinus suggests that a human self can only be said to be there if the self has either an independent motion completely of its own or an independent (*apolûton*) motion endowed by the active Unmoved Mover itself, the One (VI.1.22.1-5). It is acknowledged by Plotinus that only the latter is a real option, since the particular human soul, although it has a Form of its own in Intellect, is not absolutely eternal in the same way as is only the One (cf. VI.4.10.22-24). The background for Plotinus' doctrine is Plato's *Timaeus* (41c-42e) and *Laws* (892a, 892c, 904a-b), which imply that the human soul is generated, and the *Republic* (610a-c), which mentions that the soul is – or at least parts of it are – capable of destruction. According to Plotinus, even though the One within the human soul must be directly derived from the One, the soul cannot then be identified with the One straight away, for it rather receives and brings unity (VI.9.1.17-43, cf. VI.9.9.33-34). Likewise, the human self must therefore be dependent upon the Self of the One.

This means again, that the human self must have some sort of passivity at least as regards the One (VI.9.1.42-43). Plotinus states (VI.1.22.14-15) about the human self's activity as well that:

> […] if one looks at the same on one side it is activity, but if on the other, it is passivity.

Plotinus' indirect point is that the true Self of the human soul is the One that does not have motion or immobility but simply *is* both absolute motion and absolute immobility at the same time (cf. III.8.11.44-45).

In conclusion, it is highly interesting that the same relation between self-determination and absolute freedom applies to Plotinus' interpretation of Plato's general doctrine of the soul's self-motion,[292] i.e. that it is derived from the absolute motion of the One. Plotinus then subtly defends Plato's thesis of the self-motion of Soul against Aristotle's criticism in the *Physics* (257a31-258b9), for there is no infinite regress implied when any self-motion is actually derived from absolute motion, or when the human self is derived from the absolute Self.

292. Cf. section 'I.C.2. The One within' above.

II.C.7. Puppets, slaves or assistants?

Since the One is absolute freedom without self-determination, the existence of this Archimedean point is of immense importance for the consciousness of freedom, the relative freedom of consciousness and self-determination of the particular human soul. Plotinus announces that the soul can attain that point (VI.9.9.50-52, cf. VI.7.25.18-24):

> We must put away all other things and take our stand (*stênai*) only in this, and become this alone […].

When the "inner man" (cf. *Republic* 588d-590d) has risen to identity with God, he will no longer be the marionette of a multitude of gods (cf., e.g., *Iliad* IV) or God's puppet only (III.2.15.31-36 & 47-58, IV.4.45.24-26), cf. *Laws* (644d-e, 803c, 804b). This conception is reflected in Plotinus' use of imagery, influenced by Stoicism, of life as a play on a stage (cf. Epictetus *Handbook* 17),[293] but the very fact of our being able to play our characters more or less adequately and of either accepting or rejecting our necessary fates accordingly (III.2.17.18-59) points to some consciousness of freedom beyond simple compatibilism with predetermination. For Plotinus, this fact points to the possibility of ultimate freedom, for human souls could also become "masters of the All" (III.2.17.54-56).[294] The One within the particular human soul is in fact what makes complete predetermination incongruent with complete human acceptance,[295] for the One moves the soul from the beginning (VI.7.31.8-18) in order, eventually, to wake it up (VI.7.22.33-36). As Plotinus says (VI.8.9.11-13):

> […] necessity is in the things which follow the original principle, and even this [subsequent] necessity does not have power to force them; but this uniqueness comes from the original principle itself.

Whether people are aware of it or not, the One within is the organising principle of the human soul, and it determines a dynamic striving for liberation

293. Cf. Friis Johansen (1990) 220-21, 236-37 on this likely twist to Plato's metaphor.
294. As distinct from the determinist interpretation of, e.g., Amand (1945) 163: "La liberté […] n'est que conformité de l'esprit au Bien."
295. Cf. Trouillard (1961) 444: "Le primat de la liberté se fonde sur l'antériorité de l'union divine."

and merging with the One itself in one way or another, sooner or later. This relation presents a solution to the deepest problem of human freedom as tersely presented in VI.8.2.12-25:

> Then also, if the desires are according to nature, if they are of the kind that belongs to the living being, that is, the composite, the soul followed the necessity of nature; but if they are of the kind that belongs to the soul alone (*monês*), many of the things which are now said to be in our power (*eph' hêmin*) will be outside it. […] And how in general can we have the mastery where we are led? For that which is in need and necessarily desires to be filled does not have the mastery over that to which it is simply being led. But how in general can a self (*auto ti*) be self-originated (*par' hautou*) which comes from something else (*allou*) and whose origin (*archên*) is referred to something else and has come to be as it is from thence? For it lives according to that and as it is formed by it; or in this way soulless things will be able to have something in their power; for fire also acts as it has come to be.

That the human self is active in relation to everything else but passive in relation to the One essentially makes up the compatibility (2*) of relative freedom and necessity in Plotinus. Only because that relative freedom is relative to the absolute freedom of the One and the One within, does his relative compatibilism contain a promise of the accessibility of real freedom that highly empowers the otherwise almost indistinguishable Stoic compatibilism between determinism and freedom.[296] Because everything in some way participates in unity, and because all things have an urge towards that pure One (e.g., III.2.3.31-36, III.9.9.2-5, VI.9.6.18-19, I.7.2.1-6, III.5.3.36-37) even if they cannot after all attain it (II.3.13.31-40), such being the special ability of man (cf. III.3.4.23-24), the shared unity in fact implies some universal dynamism as well.

In the language of the problem from the *Euthyphro*, which Plotinus in effect addresses, in ultimate unification with the One men will no longer be God's slaves or servants (cf. 13d-e) but instead become his helpers and assistants (cf. 14e-15a). Plotinus explicitly (II.9.9.47-48) talks of human souls "at God's side (*para tôi theôi*)", i.e. standing at the standpoint of the One. This affirms the same line of thought as is found in the *Euthyphro*. By ascent we shall ourselves overcome any slavery to the One; a slavery to which we would otherwise be bound (VI.8.16.10). The problem was presented for Plotinus in the *Phaedo*

296. Cf. Combès (1969) 318, 321. Salmona (1967) 70, 123 has made similar points.

(79e-80a), the *Euthyphro* (13d), the *Philebus* (27a), the *First Alcibiades* (122a) and the *Parmenides* (133d-134a, 134d-e), which is counterfactually hinted at by Plotinus regarding the One as by exception a slave neither to itself nor to anything else (VI.8.19.15, VI.8.20.17-19, VI.8.21.31-32, V.5.9.17-18).

Remarkably, we become the One's assistants willingly ourselves and not because we are deliberately sent in the sense of being forced externally into this world to become assistants of the One (IV.3.13.17-20 correcting IV.8.1.46-50, cf. *Phaedo* 113a, *Timaeus* 34b-c, 41d-42a). Instead, the descent relies on internal willingness and free will,[297] and to become the One's assistants will be a matter of absolute freedom. There is no contradiction with the fact that these necessary helpers of the self-sufficient God (cf. *Euthyphro* 14e-15b) have actually been provided by Providence.[298] Far from an automatic obedience, Plotinus describes the co-operation of men (*sûmpneontôn*) with Providence acting as a leading general (III.3.2, cf. *Euthyphro* 13e-14a), while he suggests that their inherent free principle or origin (*archên […] eleutheran*) is indistinguishable from perfect Providence (III.3.4.6-13), i.e. the One in effect. For this free principle is not just something created (*pepoiêtai*, III.3.4.6-8) but, rather, something creative (*poiêtikos*, III.3.4.10, cf. II.3.13.20-27). This principle within is the only reason why man is a responsible being and could ever be blamed in so far as he fails to make things better (III.2.7.15-28, III.2.10, III.3.3.3-17, III.3.4.1-11), for he is not perfect from the beginning (II.9.17.49-51). Similarly, it is the ultimate background to Plotinus' affirmation of personal freedom that (III.2.9.1-2):

> Providence ought not to exist in such a way as to make us nothing.

Plotinus subtly follows Plato in the *Republic* (379a-380c, 617e) and the *Timaeus* (42e) in acquitting God of responsibility for any of our real misfortunes, however tragic they might appear. We must be responsible ourselves, which is only possible because we potentially have access to the absolute freedom of the One beyond Providence.

Since we have acknowledged that unification with the One is predetermined, the point must be presented in a negative way to make the claims coherent with each other. For while in Plotinus relative freedom and interior

297. Cf. the excellent analysis of the sense of the soul "being sent" in Plotinus by O'Brien (1977) 416.

298. As distinct from Underhill (1919) 491.

determination can be compatible, absolute freedom and either exterior or interior determination cannot. The claims can be rendered quite coherent by affirming that the contents of ultimate unification with the only non-determined determinant, the One, are not determined. We have already noticed that during unification with Soul one "makes the whole" of the universe (V.8.7.25-35) so to speak, i.e. one has become the cause of everything of which Soul is usually the cause. We must expect something similar to happen by unification with the One. As Plotinus says correspondingly (IV.4.17.32-34):

> But in the best man, the man who separates himself, the ruling principle is One (*hen to archon*), and the Order (*taxis*) comes from this to the rest.

The consequences of being the One will then flow forward in the world at large as the One, and simultaneously in the particular intellect, in the particular soul and in the particular body as the One within.

Interpreters have in the past placed considerable emphasis on Plotinus' doctrine that there can be no purely self-determined action, expressed in, for instance, VI.8.2.33-37:

> […] but if reason puts a stop to the desire and stands still and this is where what is in our power is (*to eph' hêmin*), this will not be in action (*en praxei*), but will stand still in Intellect (*en nôi stêsetai*); since everything in the sphere of action, even if reason (*logos*) is dominant, is mixed and cannot have being in our power in a pure state.

However, that any action must expect resistance and hindrances and that the agent of an action must therefore calculate in order to overcome them does not make either self-determination or action impossible. For self-determination is not in the action but instead in the origin of action. The same is true of absolute freedom, cf. VI.8.6.19-22:

> […] so that also the absolute freedom in actions (*to en tais praxesin autexousion*) and being in our own power (*to eph' hêmin*) is not referred to practice (*to prattein*) and outward activity but to the inner actuality (*energeian*) of virtue itself, that is, both its thought (*noêsin*) and contemplation (*theôrian*).

Absolute freedom in actions is then assumed to be possible, while neither self-determination nor absolute freedom is to be in the action but instead in the origin of the action. Concerning the self-determination of "what is

up to us" in regard to virtue, the origin of action is in Intellect and is a kind of contemplation, ultimately a contemplation of the One. Absolute freedom in actions, however, could only have its origin in the One beyond Intellect, i.e. beyond contemplation. It is not precluded in the quotation above, but simply not spelled out there, where the main focus is on self-determination. Our freedom is then not just reduced to contemplation and deprived of any action, as the usual interpretation of Plotinus claims,[299] for we can exercise absolute freedom, although not purely so because of our particular limitations.

In V.1.12.1-3, Plotinus once more raises the question as to why not everybody actualises those great possessions (*ta pêlikauta*). A partial answer to be further specified is the structure of the henological hierarchy, according to which Intellect and Soul have different roles differing from the status of the One. Plotinus in this connection calling Soul not self-moved but instead "ever-moving (*aeikinêton*)" brings the dispersive confusion of the Soul in general and the human soul in particular to the fore. For instance, the mobility (*kinoumenon*) of the circle of Soul is in IV.4.16.23-25 strongly contrasted to what here by exception seems to be the immobility (*akinêton*) of the circle of Intellect as well as of the centre of the One. Decisive for the human soul's quite different actualisations (VI.7.6.15-21, VI.4.15.36-40, I.4.13.1-6) is still its gaze or intentionality (I.1.11.4-8):

> […] then does not the 'we' include what comes before the middle? Yes, but there must be a grasp (*antilêpsin*)[300] of it. We do not always use all that we have, but only when we direct (*taxômen*) our middle part towards the higher principles or their opposites, or to whatever we are engaged in bringing from potency or state (*hexis*) to actuality.

Therefore, (V.1.12.7-8):

> […] when a particular actualising power (*energoun*) does not inform the awareness (*tôi aisthanomenôi*), it has not yet pervaded the whole soul.

299. Cf. Cilento (1963) 123 and Weismann (1997) 1190-91, 1193.

300. Cf. Violette (1994) 230-31 according to whom *antilêpsis* in Plotinus means something like a snatching cognition approaching the object from the outside, as distinct from Armstrong's 1966 translation of *antilêpsis* as "conscious apprehension" – in so far as that translation suggests an intellectual apprehension.

The ultimate awareness or wakefulness will only be obtained by unification with the One.[301]

Union with the One also means union with its power and becoming able to use its power in particular contexts (IV.3.6.31-34, cf. II.3.9.24-27, VI.7.6.15-21, VI.7.10.16-17). From this point of union, actions will be absolute, independent movements and not just seeming actions that would in fact only be effects of something else (cf. VI.3.28.1-4). Plotinus then answers his question from III.6.5.1-2 that there is after all a major difference in consequences between either potentially or actually coalescing with the One – and being impassible as it is in its activities – both for itself and for everything else considered as a total causal hierarchy. For even the smallest difference in the causal chains will have the biggest impact (IV.4.34.14-17, cf. IV.4.31.1-16). The implied disruption of determinism gives Plotinus occasion for the following vision of the total causal hierarchy (III.3.7.10-28):

> And particular things proceed from this one principle (*archê*) while it remains within; they come from it as from a single root which remains static in itself, but they flower out into a divided multiplicity, each one bearing an image of that higher reality, but when they reach this lower world one comes to be in one place and one in another, and some are close to the root and others advance farther and split up to the point of becoming, so to speak, branches and twigs and fruits and leaves; and those that are closer to the root remain for ever, and the others come into being for ever, the fruits and the leaves; and those which come into being for ever have in them the rational forming principles (*logous*) of those above them, as if they wanted to be little trees; and if they produce before they pass away, they only produce what is near to them. And what are like empty spaces between the branches are filled with shoots which also grow from the root, these, too, in a different way; and the twigs on the branches are also affected by these, so that they think the effect on them is only produced by what is close to them; but in fact the acting and the being acted upon are in the principle, and the principle (*archê*) itself, too, is dependent (*anêrtêto*). Those which act on each other are different because they come from a far-off origin, but in the beginning they come from the same source, as if brothers were to do something to each other who are alike because they originate from the same parents.

301. As distinct from the suggested interpretation of Sorabji (1999) 20, the "we", i.e. the Self, directing the middle part of the soul cannot therefore be reckoned as the embodied self, not even "the embodied self as a whole".

Clearly, human souls aspire to become such "little trees", each with the principle of the One within, that, paradoxically, could only be dependent upon the One itself.

Action from here is like an outflow but without any diminution of the One (cf. VI.7.22.8); analogous to or rather paradigmatic for our all-encompassing soul's actions from Intellect as outflows without diminution (III.4.3.21-27), cf. *Charmides* (156e-157a), *Phaedrus* (251b). A similar question of what is analogous and what is paradigmatic in the relationship between Intellect and the One arises in V.3.4.1-4:

> But we too are kings (*basileuomen*), when we are in accord with it; we can be in accord with it in two ways, either by having something like its writing written in us like laws, or by being as if filled with it and able to see it and be aware of it as present.

Here, we are told about our relation to Intellect. That relation must be analogous to our paradigmatic relation to the One, however. The One is the lawgiver for everything else including Intellect (VI.8.10.35) and although we will not see it at the time because the presence will be stronger than that which allows for "seeing", the One rather than Intellect can fill us completely (VI.9.9.20, cf. VI.8.2.19-21). By implication, Plotinus refers to not only Intellect as in this context (V.3.3.44), but pre-eminently the One as "king" later in the same treatise (*basileuein* V.3.12.42). The particular soul is compared to Soul ruling as "king" or "leader" in IV.8.4.7-10 and I.1.7.16, and correspondingly ruling as "master" in, e.g., VI.8.12.11-13, and here in V.3.4.1, the particular soul is compared to Intellect as "king".

There is strictly no textual evidence for Plotinus calling the human soul actually united with the One "king" like the One with which it has become identical in a decisive respect.[302] It will nevertheless seem to be quite a valid inference to make on Plotinus' behalf. The inference is suggested by the many Platonic, Pythagorean and Stoic associations it arouses, so as, for instance, to Plato's *Theaetetus* (146a), which has a reference to children's ball games where the one who is "coming through without a miss" is proclaimed "king".[303]

302. Cf. section 'III.B.1. The king' below.

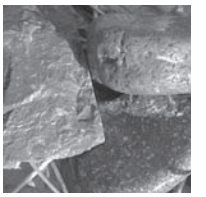
303. Whether deliberately or not – but probably appealing to a Hellenist reader like Plotinus nevertheless – Plato's reference at the same time plays upon the story in the *Odyssey* (VI.115-17) of Princess Nausicaä who, by apparently missing a ball and throwing it into the river, happened to wake up Odysseus, the hero king. Cf. notes 391, 429 and 439 below.

Moreover, Plotinus is reported to have addressed Porphyry with the words "So strike (*ball' houtôs*) and be a light to men" (*VP* 15.17), alluding to King Agamemnon's speech to the hero Teucrus in the *Iliad* (VIII.281-91). There, Agamemnon is calling Teucrus a "king of the warriors (*koirane laôn*)" and says that despite the fact that Teucrus is only an illegitimate son, his father reared him from earliest childhood in his own house (*eni oikôi*). So even though the father, King Telamon, is distant now (*têloth' eonta*), Teucrus will bring him great glory. For Plotinus, the full Neoplatonic significance of his reference to the *Iliad* is that the mistress mother corresponds to the earthly Aphrodite or World Soul (I.6.8.18-21, VI.9.9.28-46, cf. *Symposium* 180d-e, *Philebus* 12b, *Seventh Letter* 335b),[304] whereas the father king corresponds to the One.[305] Though in most ways distant from this world, its presence can be felt from within the human soul.

The human soul's self-determination within Soul is helped by the perfect self-mastery of Intellect, but will only be set by the master or king himself, the One. Compared to the self-determination of Soul (cf. *Laws* 904a-c, 960c-d) the One is fundamentally ahistorical (VI.8.21.7-8). Only by way of particular human souls will it have immediate historical impact. Its path of historical influence leads through the field of politics.[306]

304. Cf. subsection 'III.B.9.a. Gender, sex and love' below.
305. As it appears, I consider the restriction of O'Brien (1992a) 339-40 unwarranted: "Mais, même si nous devenons des 'rois', partageant ainsi la connaissance qu'a l'Intellect de lui-même, nous ne devenons pas 'rois' au sens où le sera l'Un, 'régnant' (*basileuonta*) au sommet et même au-dessus du monde intelligible." Cf. note 155 above and the general comments on the ascending and dialectical nature of treatise V.3 in section 'I.C.2. The One within' above and section 'III.B.1. The king' below.
306. Cf. Leroux (1996) 303: "Must one already be free to free oneself? This […] touches on the very possibility of ethics and politics."

Part III



POLITICS

The optimistic views on the possibility of attaining interior human freedom explored in the previous parts of this book must by necessity involve consequences for the governance of exterior freedom or politics as well, because there will be a necessary causal nexus between the "inner" and the "outer" man. What kind of politics did Plotinus imagine would be the consequence?

Today, Western politics, and American politics in particular, are strongly based on ideals consciously drawn from ancient Greece and ancient Rome.[307] The same is to a great extent true for the suggestions of a political philosophy in Plotinus. To be sure, it is commonly said of Plotinus that in contrast to Plato he did not have any political views and that metaphysics was his only interest.[308] However, some have succeeded in finding traces of the *Realpolitik*

307. Cf., e.g., Ames & Montgomery (1934), Rexine (1976), Meyer (1986) and Hansen (1993).

308. Cf. Theiler (1960) 67 and confirmed in discussion by Schwyzer ibid. p. 89 and Armstrong ibid. p. 95. In a note to his 1984 translation of IV.4.17 Armstrong begins by saying: "Plotinus is not interested in politics" but then he goes on to say that the factual political opinions of Plotinus were in fact so banal as to be shared by everyone.

Probably some of these views are reflections of the report on Emperor Gallienus in the far from reliable *Augustan History*, *The two Gallieni* XI-XVIII. Gibbon (1776) chapter X draws on this and on Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* (*VP*) 12 when he writes that Emperor Gallienus' reign was incompetent due to an unpolitical attitude, inspired by Plotinus. He mentions "the experiment of realizing Plato's Republic" but only as evidence of Gallienus' unrealistic policy. In chapter XIII, he looks back upon Plotinus from an Enlightenment standpoint, possibly remembering Plotinus' role in Ficino's Renaissance occultism, and though he admits that the philosopher entertained deep thoughts, he denounces them →

of his day in his writings and even traces of a certain attitude towards this *Realpolitik* as well.[309] I will start by addressing both of these issues but then I want to concentrate on the adjacent question as to whether he had some independent political philosophy to hand down to posterity. If this is the case, and I can say already that I do not doubt that it is, I will try to state in what it consists.[310]

→ as being of no use. Also, the Dominican monk Giovanni Dominici *Faint Light in the Night* (Lucula Noctis, Florence 1405) chapter XVIII considers Plotinus' views useless for community, along with those of other ancient non-Aristotelian philosophers: "Socrates disdained public office, Diogenes the royal courts, Plato the masses, Anaxagoras riches, while Plotinus took refuge in unfrequented places." Similarly, Pugliese Carratelli (1947) 69, 71-72, Manni (1949) 62-63, Ehrhardt (1953) 464, 481, Carbonara (1954) 280 and Ehrhardt (1959) 211 reject the notion of Plotinus having any political influence at all, whereas Alföldi (1930b) 247-63 and Alföldi (1939) 188 regard Gallienus' acquaintance with Plotinus as having at least some sustaining impact upon his policy.

309. Cf. Wundt (1919) 36-57, Alföldi (1930b) 247-61, Alföldi (1939) 188, Caramella (1940) 37, Katz (1957), Cilento (1971), Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 61-70, de Blois (1976) 175-93 & *passim*, Jerphagnon (1981) 215-29, Jerphagnon (1982) 397-404, Jerphagnon (1987) 400-04, de Blois (1989), Prini (1992) 24-27 and Lim (1995) 37-47.

310. Daunas (1848) 112-13 and Schall (1985) consider Plotinus' view of politics and political philosophy as purely deprecatory, much the same way as did Giovanni Dominici, mentioned in note 308 above. Unfortunately, Schall (1985) does not really try to understand Plotinus' philosophy apart from any supposed contrast to Aristotle or what later authors thought of it. Although a number of key passages discussed further below have been mentioned by the contemporary article by Jurado (1985), the same conclusion is stated there. Similar verdicts have been repeated over and over again even in special studies coming close to the subject like Westra (1990) 46, 123, 130, 169, 176-80, Neschke-Hentschke (1995) 214, Weismann (1997) 1163, 1176 or Santa Cruz (2000) 214 n. 48. *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* edited by Rowe & Schofield (2000) does not mention Plotinus at all. Recent articles of D.J. O'Meara and especially his book, O'Meara (2003), have begun a reappraisal of the political element among the Neoplatonists in general.

In greater detail, I myself set out to partly elaborate on and partly correct a remark like the one in van Oort (1991) 249: "Plotinus spoke not only of the beloved supernal homeland but also – although he used Plato, as Theiler asserted, as a *Plato dimidiatus*, a Plato without politics – of the earthly city (polis) and the participation of the citizen in it. Statements on these subjects can be found throughout his treatises."

Chapter III.A

Coming to imperial Rome

From Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* we get a vivid picture, though, it is not a sharp one in all respects. Yet, we can allow ourselves to infer a great deal about his life from Porphyry's portrait *post mortem*, written in 300-01 CE (cf. *VP* 4.1-9, 23.12-14), close to the last years of Porphyry's own life (233-ca. 305 CE), during the reign of Emperor Diocletian (284-305 CE). It is clear that Plotinus comes from Hellenised circles in Egypt.[311] We are told that at the age of twenty-seven he heard Ammonius Saccas in Alexandria for the first time and may have stayed with him as his pupil throughout the next eleven years (one year longer than the ten years Plato stayed with Socrates, according to a contemporaneous view that was probably generally accepted, cf. Anonymous (Platonist) *Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy* 3.15-20),[312] until the outbreak of war in Mesopotamia.

Porphyry's chronology on this matter is evidently odd, as if it has been determined by the remarkable coincidence of letting Plotinus' arrival in Rome coincide with his prime (*akmê*) at the age of forty (*VP* 3.22-24).[313] This date is derived, as Porphyry explicitly states (*VP* 2.29-40) from the information given by Eustochius, Plotinus' friend and physician at his deathbed, that Plotinus was sixty-six years old when he died. The information is after all remarkably precise

311. Not necessarily Lyco or Lycopolis, the presupposition for the discussion of Zucker (1950). Even if there might have been wealthy families there, it would be just as natural if Plotinus came from Alexandria, cf. Harder (1958) 78, 83. Neither Lyco nor Lycopolis are mentioned by Porphyry, only by Eunapius *Lives of Philosophers and Sophists* III.1.1-2.
312. Cf. Whittaker (1995) 168.
313. Cf. Oppermann (1929) 54-55.

and we do not have anything more reliable that should lead us to question it seriously. In fact, Eustochius and Porphyry were not later doxographers trying to make sense of Plotinus' life but highly intelligent people, who knew him well. Moreover, the foundation of the Academy was surely not considered the culmination of Plato's life, so why should the beginning of teaching in Rome be considered the culmination of Plotinus' life? Nor can one expect the arrival in Rome to be the culmination in itself, for it does not show in the remarks of the otherwise quite self-important Porphyry on his own coming to city (*VP* 4.1-9). Though they perhaps desperately tried to find some culmination in his life, it would still be quite awkward if Eustochius or Porphyry made this geographical change in Plotinus' life the unique point of departure for the determination of his age. In a *lectio difficilior*, the unexpectedness of these biographical data might simply be due to the fact that this was the way things were. Porphyry does not seem to have had any exact conceptions of Plotinus' age on the basis of his looks while alive that would contradict the information he received from Eustochius after Plotinus' death. Rist thinks that Plotinus might perfectly well have been ten years younger than Porphyry reports.[314] If, however, he had some doubts or contradicting impressions regarding Plotinus' age before, it is unlikely that he would have more than doubled the age gap between himself and Plotinus from nine to nineteen years without showing some signs of divergence of opinion at least.

To prove that Plotinus' late interest in philosophy, judged by usual standards, is not completely unhealthy, Richard Harder has compared him with Buddha and other great thinkers, who had their intellectual breakthroughs at the same age, during their twenty-eighth year.[315] Harder neglects the fact that the start of Plotinus' philosophical acquaintance with Ammonius was not necessarily an acute philosophical breakthrough as was, for instance, the breakthrough experienced by Hume. He might be right, though, that Plotinus, like the young prince Buddha, was living a life of luxury until his twenty-eighth year and then, in a sort of similar nausea, turned to philosophy. Moreover, Harder conceives of Plotinus as also having noble ancestry. His view is based on the fact of Plotinus' later participation in Emperor Gordian III's campaign against Sassanid Persia, and the argument that this participation could only have occurred if the family of Plotinus had connections within the Roman senate, or his ancestors were Roman citizens, or if his family had direct con-

314. Cf. Rist (1967) 3.
315. Cf. Harder (1960b) 278.

nections with Emperor Gordian. In fact it does not necessarily have to be that way.[316] The fact that Plotinus was given the male version of former Emperor Trajan's empress Plotina's name is too meagre as evidence for any connection; from his name we cannot even tell whether the family was Roman. As scholars have pointed out since, Plotinus only had to show up at the reception camp in Syria, whereupon he might easily have followed the imperial army towards the East.[317]

However, it is also rash to infer from this possibility that Plotinus was not or could not have been the son of a wealthy family. Several things indicate that the observations of Harder on Plotinus' later wealthy life in Rome, elaborated in greater detail by Lucien Jerphagnon, are correct. With his rich life style, his acquaintances and his occupations, he certainly belonged to the immediate periphery of the class of senators. In his daily life in Rome he could afford masseurs (*VP* 2.5-10), and he went on summer vacation engaging in friendly conversations on great estates in Campania (*VP* 5.1-5), the holiday spot for the Roman upper class. His physician Eustochius, for instance, was summoned from Puteoli, a seaside resort for the ultimate élite, to his deathbed in the villa of the predeceased physician Zethus, about six Roman miles (i.e. nine kilometres) from Minturnae (*VP* 2.17-25, 7.17-23).[318] In his circle of pupils and friends were definitely wealthy and influential men, who later, for instance, had no trouble raising the funds for a long, lofty commemorative poem on his destiny in the hereafter from Apollo's oracle (cf. IV.7.15.2-12), probably

316. Noted by, e.g., Blumenthal (1969) 325.

317. Cf. Armstrong (1967a) 201: "[…] it is likely enough that he was a very insignificant hanger-on indeed with no definable rank or function", Blumenthal (1987) 531: "We have after all no evidence as to Plotinus' status on the expedition" and Okamura (1995) 110-11.

318. Minturnae is on the mouth of the Liris, the north western boundary river of Campania. According to the information of Porphyry, the villa must have been either up the river to the north east, near the village Pagus Vescinus (nine km distant, at modern Castelforte) and in the neighbourhood of the baths further up at Aquae Vescinae (now the Suio Thermae, sixteen km distant), or to the east, towards the town Suessa Aurunca (now Sessa, fourteen km distant), or along the coast to the south east, towards the villa at the medieval tower Torre San Limato (twelve km distant) and the town Sinuessa (thirteen km distant). Castrichino (1980) 24-25 argues in favour of the Roman remains with sarcophagi from the third century CE under the church in Suio Forma (exactly nine km distant, on the road to the Suio Thermae). This appears to be in agreement with the mentioning in Firmicus Maternus *Astrological Learning* I.7.16 (written in 337 CE) of Plotinus' convalescence in Campania, where medication is generally announced to consist of a warm spa and bubbling mineral spring water.

the Pythian in Delphi (*VP* 22.1-63).[319] Five men with political interests are explicitly mentioned by Porphyry, namely Castricius Firmus, Zethus, Marcellus Orrontius, Sabinillus and Rogatianus. The last three were definitely members of the senate but we can infer (from *VP* 7.29-30) that, among the pupils, they were not the only ones. Possibly Rogatianus was the one who was appointed praefect of the army on the Rhine in 241 CE and proconsul for Asia in 254 CE,[320] and Sabinillus may have been the one who was made ordinary consul together with Emperor Gallienus in 266 CE.

Plotinus was not just a Roman citizen, as every free man was given citizenship with Emperor Caracalla's law in 212 CE, but an honoured Roman, as close as could be to an *honestus*. Porphyry tells us that without ever making any enemies among the officials, he was sought as an arbitrator and that he was confidently made the fatherly curator and supervisor of aristocratic orphans (*VP* 9). Harder points out that although his pupils for the most part came from the Hellenised East like himself, many of these circumstances accord rather to noble Roman than to Oriental or classic Hellenic ideals.[321] We might say, rather, they are the practices of a Roman nobleman attuned to Platonic ideals, as his duties as an arbitrator and as a curator of orphans accord with Plato's *Laws* (924a-928d), especially on the need for arbitrators to make the laws more fitting to particular persons (926a). He lived in a house owned by the lady Gemina, who had a daughter of the same name as herself.

There is a tiny possibility that this lady Gemina could have been Afinia M.F. Gemina Baebiana, the widow of Emperor Trebonian Gallus (251-53 CE).[322] If Gemina the mother was the former empress, she must have begot-

319. As distinct from Goulet (1982) 380-81 and Goulet (1992) 603-04, who thinks that the quoted Apollonian oracle answering Amelius' question could just as well be situated in Asia Minor or Syria. However, in his introduction, Porphyry refers not only to the Delphic answer concerning Socrates (cf. *Apology* 20e-21e) but, first in order, also to the Delphic oracle's reply to Croesus according to Herodotus I.47. The point of the story in Herodotus is that only the Delphic oracle is genuine, while Porphyry with the other reference concordantly implies that only the oracle in Delphi is trustworthy enough quoting as regards a Neoplatonic philosopher of Plotinus' standing. When asking for the distinctive origin and destiny of a philosopher, a precise divination is highly demanded. Porphyry subtly sharpens this demand (*VP* 22.1-5) by citing Hesiod's comment (*Theogony* 35) on a Homeric tag, which appears in the *Apology* (34d), leaving no doubt that the descent of a philosopher is spiritual rather than biological or geological – and that he, rather than Amelius, ought to be considered the spiritual offspring of and heir to Plotinus (*VP* 21.9-23).
320. Cf. Brisson (1982) 109.
321. Cf. Harder (1960b) 283-85, 290 and especially in his discussion of Theiler (1960) 90-92.
322. *CIL* XI.1 Perusia 1926-28, cf. Brisson (1992a) 10, 19 and Saffrey (1992) 32.

ten her daughter Gemina with another father than Trebonian, since the only recorded daughter of Trebonian Gallus and Afinia Gemina was Vibia Galla. Their marriage had also produced a son, Volusian, who was a co-emperor with his father until both of them were murdered, so if the mother had another daughter after this long marriage, it could probably not have been too long after her becoming a widow.

Emperor Trebonian Gallus was an almost immediate precursor of Emperor Valerian (253-60 CE) and Valerian's son and co-emperor, Emperor Gallienus (253-68 CE). Valerian, who was a trusted subordinate commander of Trebonian, fought the usurper Emperor Aemilian on behalf of Trebonian in 253 CE. He was subsequently proclaimed emperor himself when the news spread that Trebonian had been murdered.[323] The widow of Trebonian, then, possibly had good connections with Emperor Valerian and his son. Perhaps she was the one who later introduced Emperor Gallienus and his empress to Plotinus (cf. *VP* 12.1-2). Moreover, since dying nobles let their children be raised in her house, it must have been quite a seat of wealth and honour (*VP* 9.5-9), and not just a tenement house for accidental lodgers. Gemina must have been relatively wealthy whether or not she was a former empress. Acting as a *tutor* or guardian for these children according to strict Roman law, Plotinus must himself have been a highly creditable person within the best circles of Rome (*VP* 9.9 & 14-16).[324]

Such a wealthy and honoured status in Rome would be hard to account for if his family in Egypt was in possession of neither wealth nor honour beforehand. From these relatively unproblematic, carefree and well-off circumstances in Rome – which are unquestioned by Porphyry – we can hardly infer that at the time of the campaign against Persia, Plotinus was just another tramp, trying his luck on the emperor's campaign eastward. If he did come from a rich family, and did indeed have family connections with senatorial or even imperial circles, it is not unthinkable that he may have been in the emperor's suite, as this was almost the only place outside the camp of baggage and merely semi-military followers (*lixae*) where such a man could attend the campaign.

The later so very famous contemporary Babylonian hierophant and theologian Mani (216-76 CE) had just been summoned to the court of the newly established Sassanid Persian Great King Sapor I (240-72 CE) and his great nobles (*megistanes*) in between, on the one hand, the accession of Sapor either as a co-regent in 240 CE or his accession as sole regent in 241-42 CE and, on

323. Cf., e.g., Zosimus *New History* I.28-29.
324. Cf. Harder in discussion with Theiler (1960) 91.

the other hand, Mani's own twenty-fifth birthday in the subsequent year (*On the Origin of his Body* 18; 130-34; 164). During the time of Roman preparations for the campaign in Mesopotamia (242-44 CE), Mani, however, had not yet become that famous in the West and was probably not heard of west of Persia until many years later.[325] As Whittaker has pointed out, Plotinus' interest in Indian and Persian philosophy (i.e. the philosophy of the magi) coincided with an identical interest of Plato according to a contemporary anecdote (e.g., Apuleius *On Plato and his Doctrines* I.3.186, Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Philosophers* III.7). In both cases, satisfying their interest was precluded by war in the intervening area.[326] Unlike Plato, however, Plotinus served in the war. It is likely that not only the Alexandrine Plotinus but also the Roman emperor knew about the proud Hellenistic traditions of philosophers who followed Alexander the Great in his campaign eastward, and the emperor could have considered the participation of Plotinus as a good omen of fortunes of war. Emperor Gordian was nineteen years old, even younger than Alexander at the start of his Eastern campaign.

Timesitheus, the father-in-law of the emperor and one of the two appointed praefects of the army, in fact the most important praefect of the praetorians, is said to have been "a highly learned man (*vir doctissimus*)", so until his death in the preliminary stages of the campaign into Mesopotamia, he might have been practically in charge of Plotinus.[327] It is difficult to see how the wealthy, senatorial or imperial friends of Plotinus in Rome could be a natural consequence of his journey to Syria and Mesopotamia,[328] if he was just a hanger-on in the camp of tapsters, craftsmen, prostitutes and tramps as Lawrence Okamura believes. Such a change of circumstance would demand a great deal of luck, as would overcoming the resulting paradox that the defeat of Gordian's army and Plotinus' ensuing flight back to Syria would amount to an immediate social advantage for him.

There is a more obvious reason why Plotinus could not have been an insignificant tramp in Syria and Mesopotamia. Relying on remarks from Armstrong and Blumenthal, Okamura seems to suggest that Plotinus easily gleaned his knowledge of Platonism from occasional wine bar tales, which inspired him to embark upon a bohemian tour eastward to gain some Eastern spirituality as

325. Cf. Edwards (1994) 141.
326. Cf. Whittaker (1995) 167, where, however, Diogenes Laertius VII.3 is accidentally mistaken for III.7.
327. Cf. *Augustan History*, *The three Gordians* XXIII.6, XXIX.1 and Zosimus *New History* I.17.2.
328. Cf. Okamura (1995) 112.

well. Plotinus' writings, however, show a profound knowledge of philosophical literature, Plato, Aristotle, commentators on Aristotle, Stoics and a number of other difficult authors. Even in affluent societies today few researchers possess such wide reading in these texts, let alone the same philosophic nerve as Plotinus. One does not acquire as a day-labourer the elementary knowledge of texts that is a precondition for the self-confident and virtuoso juggling with difficult, centuries old conceptual traditions. It demands leisure to become acquainted with philosophical matters, and Plotinus, therefore, must have enjoyed such leisure. He was, as Harder believes, at least the son of a wealthy family. Many families sent their children to school in Egypt, but fewer were able to afford a nurse to follow the child as did the family of Plotinus (*VP* 3.2-6) according to the story chosen by Plotinus and by Porphyry alike as representative of his childhood. We learn of no greater problems during his childhood and youth than his difficulties weaning himself from his wet nurse.[329]

Plotinus could not have joined the campaign only to gain escort and funds, following it to Rome. First of all, he was probably not in any need of funds. If the fare for Rome was not a preordained advantage of his engagement with the military, which could be considered valid even after his flight to Antioch from Mesopotamia (*VP* 3.21-24), it seems nevertheless to have occasioned no economic problem when Plotinus probably embarked on a ferry from Seleucia Pieria, the seaport of Antioch, directly to Rome, although Seleucia is a great deal further away from Rome than is Alexandria. Secondly, according to all premonitions, it must have appeared far more risky for both security and health to join an army campaign than to go by ship to Rome. It was not entirely without precedent that a campaign turned disastrous. If Plotinus had joined the campaign primarily to gain escort, there would have been little reason to follow the campaign as far as into Mesopotamia. He could have simply waited in Caesarea or Seleucia Pieria for the army to return to the waterfront, depending of course on a special agreement with the army in advance in order not to be considered a deserter.[330]

329. I agree with Miles (1999) 90 that Porphyry's main purpose in telling this story is to illustrate the asceticism of Plotinus and his shame of bodily feelings. However, Porphyry's intentions should be distinguished from the significance of Plotinus' words here as well, cf. Miles (1999) 91 and subsection 'III.B.9.a. Gender, sex and love' below.

330. As distinct from Edwards (1994) 141-42, who also believes that his "philosophy required him to abandon wealth". This is to some extent correct, but that he renounced all the wealth given him by his family cannot be taken for granted for philosophical reasons, cf. the just heir in the *Republic* (328b-331d). Likewise, his life in Rome does not reveal that he ever renounced wealth as such, but probably only excessive private property and profits (cf. *VP* 7).

This means that Porphyry's story is not unlikely, i.e. that Plotinus went with the imperial army to Syria and Mesopotamia in order to acquaint himself with Eastern philosophy. Perhaps he was inspired by the saying that was certainly in circulation later on that Plato came to Phoenicia, which now had become a part of Roman coastal Syria, to meet Persian philosophers (cf. Anonymous (Platonist) *Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy* 4.10-11). That Plotinus' interest in Eastern and even Egyptian philosophy and religion (V.8.6.1-9, IV.3.11.1-6, *VP* 10.15-38) is not too strong, as Harder observes,[331] could reveal that, while his official task on the military expedition was scientific, he in fact went along rather in hopes of acquainting himself with the ultimate ruling circles of Rome for the purpose of afterwards creating a career there – as he in fact did.

Okamura remarks that Plotinus' information on the emperor's eastern military plans could have been acquired through the temporal imperial emissary in Alexandria, Domitius Philippus. It is striking – as some found papyri suggest – that for more than a year before the campaign, this imperial praefect, who was evidently first of all meant to provide the best troops from Egypt, stayed in Alexandria.[332] Plotinus must have been sufficiently approved of by this appointed imperial commander (Gr. *stratêlatês*, Lat. *dux*) to be admitted into the suite of the emperor. Neither Plotinus nor his wealthy family had to have any direct senatorial connections or be the personal friends of the emperor beforehand. Obviously, however, he was not appointed as any ordinary soldier, for if he was thirty-eight years of age as Porphyry says or even just twenty-eight at the time, this would have been either twenty or ten years too old according to ordinary standards.[333] His qualifications as a philosopher must have been sufficient.

The Roman army was finally defeated at Misiche (afterwards renamed Pirisabora, i.e. "victorious Sapor", now the ruins of al-Ambâr) some eighty kilometres west of Ctesiphon (or forty kilometres west of modern Baghdad). If Emperor Gordian were killed in battle, the trilingual inscription of the victor Sapor at Naqs-i-Rustam near Persepolis would have surely mentioned it. It does not; instead, it just reads:

331. Harder (1960b) 278, cf. Edwards (1994) 141.
332. Cf. Okamura (1995) 104-05.
333. As distinct from Edwards (1994) 141-42.

> And Emperor Gordian was killed, and we destroyed the army of the Romans. And the Romans proclaimed Philip emperor.[334]

Okamura is right that the latter sentence signifies a modification of the former, since according to other sources, "the Romans" mentioned in the last clause must be soldiers of the remaining army, which had not fled.[335] King Sapor's enumeration of different sensational events indicates no certain, causal relation between them, except for the circumstance that Emperor Gordian died before Philip became emperor. It cannot be inferred from this inscription or from the Sibyl, who tells us that "Gordian was struck down by his companion in the ranks" (*Oracular Replies* XIII.19-20) that he died from his wounds on the eve of the battle, only that he was somehow wounded. He could have died later on.[336] Some sources say that he was murdered by a group of dissatisfied soldiers, whether he had been wounded or not beforehand, and some of these again say that the murder was conceived by his new praefect of the praetorians, Philip the Arab,[337] who was appointed when the excellent praefect Timesitheus suddenly died on the border of Mesopotamia. The death of this father-in-law might have proven fatal to Emperor Gordian, as Timesitheus had been a most reliable planner and experienced organiser. All through the campaign, however, Philip's brother Priscus remained the other appointed praefect of the army.

If Gordian was defeated though not killed in battle, but instead was subsequently murdered by Philip (directly or indirectly), then the question should be raised whether Plotinus was sufficiently close to Emperor Gordian to fear for his own life, or whether he just escaped the army's logistical breakdown after the defeat like everybody else who was not strictly a soldier. Probably, the logistical breakdown was fairly limited after all, and if Plotinus did not stay behind in the strongholds of either Dura-Europus or Circesium on the bor-

334. Cf. the Greek text in Maricq (1958) 307, 309. Unfortunately, my language skills do not suffice to check the corresponding medium Persian and Parthian texts; I here rely on the interpretation of Okamura (1995), cf. (next) note 335 below.
335. Okamura (1995) 98, cf. Edwards (1994) 140.
336. As distinct from Edwards (1994) 138 and Körner (2002a) 75-90, cf. the convincing argument in Meckler (2003) that Emperor Gordian was definitely not killed before the battle.
337. Among the former are the Sibyl *Oracular Replies* XIII.7 and Orosius *Histories against the Pagans* VII.19, while the latter include Ammianus Marcellinus *Deeds* XXIII.5.7 & 17, Aurelius Victor *On the Emperors* XXVII.8, Eutropius *Abbreviated History of Rome* IX.2.3, *Augustan History*, *The three Gordians* XXVIII and Zosimus *New History* I.18.2-19.2.

der of the re-secured Roman province of Mesopotamia, reacting to the news from a distance, as Okamura suggests,[338] he might simply have followed suit when the army fled, as a flight on his own would have been far more risky.[339] Led by the new emperor Philip, the army managed to throw up a barrow as a cenotaph in honour of Gordian at the place Zaitha (now the village al-Marwâniyya), where he is said to have finally died, about thirty kilometres south of Circesium and about five hundred kilometres upstream from the battlefield, whereas his bones were brought all the way back to Rome.[340]

Some infer that the fact Plotinus leaves for Rome and remains there while Philip seizes power indicates that Plotinus did not need to fear for his life at the hands of Philip. Therefore, one might also infer that either Plotinus was not close to Gordian, or that Philip did not really murder or arrange to murder Gordian. In the opinion of Harder, and independently of Harder, of Stewart Irvin Oost,[341] Plotinus was so close to Gordian that Philip must have intended to kill him as a witness to his murder of the emperor. Since Philip's murder of Gordian is taken for granted by both authors, Plotinus' journey to Rome becomes hard to explain. We must believe that some of Plotinus' family and property still existed in Egypt. If the life of Plotinus really was in danger from the new emperor, however, it could have been just as big a risk to leave for Alexandria. There he would not be under protection from any authority higher than the imperial garrison. So why not leave for Rome instead? Plotinus did just that.

In Rome, there were other authorities than merely the emperor to appeal to, as the senate was not completely powerless and would not be particularly enthusiastic about any soldier emperor like Philip. Admittedly, Porphyry tells us that Philip already had declared himself emperor, when Plotinus arrived in Rome (*VP* 3.22-24). Philip had announced himself as emperor in Mesopotamia, but he had a long way to go to the capital and he surely had not yet

338. Cf. Okamura (1995) 110-12.

339. Cf. Edwards (1994) 140.

340. Ammianus Marcellinus *Deeds* XXIII.5.7 & 17 and Eutropius *Abbreviated History of Rome* IX.2.3 (Both authors participated in Emperor Julian's Persian campaign a hundred years later; the former was definitely an eyewitness to the existence of the cenotaph), cf. Okamura (1995) 98-99 as distinct from Edwards (1994) 138. As distinct from the estimate of Okamura (1995) 98, i.e. 390 km, I believe my approximation is closer to the actual course of the river Euphrates.

341. Cf. Oost (1958), Harder (1958), Harder (1960a), especially Harder (1960b) and also his remarks in the discussion of Theiler (1960) 89-93. Harder died in 1957, soon after the conference in Vandœuvres-Geneva.

won the approval of the senate and Rome, at the time Plotinus headed for the capital. If they did not arrive together, and if Philip really was the first to arrive, Plotinus could gain from the common confusion connected with the seizure of power and potential uncertainty, forgetfulness, neglect or Emperor Philip's grace towards minor opponents like him.

If Plotinus would be unprotected against the emperor's arbitrariness in Alexandria, where everyone probably knew his family, in Rome he may have had an opportunity of letting his possible senatorial friends protect him. A political murder of Plotinus would not pass unnoticed there in the same manner as in Alexandria or, for that matter, any other place in the empire.[342] Moreover, Rome presented the advantage of being the capital. Many influential and important men were there or would likely come along. In contrast to Alexandria, there were really no institutional, philosophical traditions in Rome beforehand but one could reasonably expect a big, potential demand. This circumstance together with the fact that Plotinus had not been appointed the official successor of Ammonius Saccas, if he ever appointed any, would presumably have been reason enough for Plotinus to decide even before he joined Gordian's army that he should subsequently go to Rome.[343] As Rist remarks, Plotinus had a philosophical reason for not going to the official philosophical capital of the empire. The study of the ancients had lost its sparkle in Athens in spite of, or perhaps even due to, officially appointed professors there (*VP* 15.18-21, 20.36-40, probably reflected ironically concerning the Aristotelian category "where" in VI.1.14.13-17).[344] For Plotinus, regaining this sparkle was all-important. By teaching in Rome, he consequently declared himself independent of the official Academic philosophy practised in Athens. His luck held. For instance, in the third year of both his stay and Emperor Philip's reign, Amelius, who turned out to be the most faithful of his pupils and became his assistant, joined him (*VP* 3.38-42), apparently without any imperial spite.

Porphyry quotes Longinus as writing (*VP* 20.32-33) that in Rome Plotinus and his prominent pupil Amelius held public lectures. Now, different levels of publicity are possible. Naturally, we must believe that most of the gatherings took part in the house of Plotinus' landlady Gemina. It is hardly conceivable that anyone just happening to drop in from the street was allowed in free of charge. Citizens, or rather, free men of a certain social dignity and members

342. As distinct from Blumenthal (1987) 531.
343. Cf. Edwards (1994) 140-41.
344. Cf. Rist (1967) 4 and Menn (2001) 120-21.

of their families would be admitted in exchange for a fee – by and large as a symbolic gesture, so as not to abolish the notion of 'a public lecture'. It was certainly public in some sense, since Plotinus, for instance, is not warned in advance as Origen the Platonist, his old fellow-pupil of Ammonius from Alexandria, shows up one day and unintentionally makes him ashamed of his lecture (*VP* 14.20-25). If the payment was symbolic, then Plotinus did not make his living from that but rather from his other duties, his friends or possibly inherited property.

Into this circle came Emperor Gallienus and his wife Empress Salonina (*VP* 12). We do not know whether this was before or after the co-emperor Valerian, the father of Gallienus, had been taken prisoner of war by the Persians – according to one story, during what should have been confidential, personal negotiations with King Sapor – at the Roman Mesopotamian city of Edessa in the summer of 260 CE, never to re-appear.[345] It is plausible though, that the imperial couple's engagement with Plotinus happened afterwards, in the time of Gallienus' reign as sole emperor. Otherwise, Porphyry might have mentioned Valerian at the same time. Also, it is a remarkable coincidence that Plotinus does not begin writing before the accession of Gallienus in 253 CE (*VP* 4.9-11). He wrote all his fifty-four treatises the last seventeen years of his life. Such a huge strain of work is easier to account for if it was encouraged by a deliberate imperial policy, such as the current of philhellenic renaissance during Gallienus' reign.[346]

Although Plotinus definitely belonged to the imperial circle,[347] he must have been considered in the periphery of the circle of friends, the *amici principis* of the imperial couple Gallienus and Salonina. He was not killed when Claudius II the Goth took power, but he and all his close friends, with the exception of the senator Castricius, who bore the striking epithet Firmus (*VP* 7.24), retreated from Rome. Plotinus went to the estate of Zethus, an Arab physician with strong political interests, who had already died, located near Minturnae in Campania (*VP* 2.7-20, 7.17-23). We are not told exactly how or when but, presumably, Zethus did not pass away too long before the mortally ill Plotinus arrived at his country house. Their friendship extended

345. Cf., e.g., Zosimus *New History* I.36.2 and note 378 below.

346. Cf. Alföldi (1930b), who p. 257 refers to the suggestion of Wundt (1919) 42-43 that the writings of Plotinus were commenced at Emperor Gallienus' request, cf. also Alföldi (1939) 188. Heinemann (1921b) 500, on the other hand, considers an imperial request implausible but does not explain why.

347. Cf. Jerphagnon (1987) 404.

beyond death as their usual summer arrangement was probably approved of by the widow on behalf of possible sons and other of Zethus' heirs. This apparently minor estate once belonged to Castricius whose vicinal property in Minturnae continued to supply Plotinus with otherwise unmet requirements (*VP* 2.17-23, 7.22-24).

An epidemic, the plague in particular, is a plausible explanation for retreat from a city, even for a notable philosopher like Plotinus. A wave of "the plague" (i.e. some typhoid exanthem) certainly hit Rome during the last years of Emperor Gallienus' reign, but the precise date remains uncertain among general historians of the time, and it is also unclear how severely the city in particular was hit. Porphyry's account (*VP* 2.7-15) is the most accurate as to the date, in so far as he says that Plotinus contracted diphtheria right after "the plague", apparently as an effect thereof. Plotinus' diphtheria began at a time when Porphyry had left the city, i.e. 268 CE, the same year as the downfall of Gallienus. "The plague" could have ravaged the city of Rome perhaps half a year, or one or two years earlier.[348]

However, it seems as if Plotinus and close friends like Amelius and Porphyry – unlike other friends, who stayed but were more like acquaintances to him (*VP* 2.15-20) – left some time, perhaps half a year, after "the plague" had caused at least the death of his masseurs. Amelius and Porphyry went much farther than Plotinus and his accompanying physician Eustochius, not just to Campania but to Syria and Sicily respectively. They might have left at just the time Claudius came to power, occasioned by the murder of Gallienus arranged by opposing parties of the senate. The main reason for Gallienus' sudden downfall was his reform of the armed forces: having a perhaps strictly meritocratic intention, he issued a decree giving the equestrian class priority of command at the expense of senators.[349] Members of Gallienus' family and

348. The first wave of "the plague" that appeared in Carthage in 253 CE hit Rome in 255 CE but, as distinct from Miles (1999) 92, Porphyry most probably refers to the second wave that hit the city of Rome in the middle of the 260s CE, cf. *Augustan History*, *The two Gallieni* V.5-6, Aurelius Victor *On the Emperors* XXXIII.5-6, Zosimus *New History* I.37.3, Orosius *Histories against the Pagans* VII.22.1-2. Grmek (1992) 337 dates the second wave as occurring in 265-66 CE.

349. Cf. Aurelius Victor *On the Emperors* XXXIII.33-34. It is not altogether certain that senators were excluded from command right away as Aurelius Victor writes. For instance, Gallienus was himself a senator and was supposed to remain Commander-in-Chief. Aurelius Victor's propagandist rhetoric on behalf of the patrician senators is obvious, when he probably reverses the case and describes the reform as intentionally refusing the command of "the best" (i.e. the optimats, the nobility, the aristocracy).

other supporters were persecuted and killed right after the overthrow.[350] For instance, the politically interested physician Zethus must have died around this time (cf. *VP* 2.15-20), and just on the basis of his being a politically interested pupil of Plotinus, he could have been counted a supporter of Gallienus (cf. *VP* 12). Another physician, Paulinus, also a pupil of Plotinus, died around this time (*VP* 7.16-17). Porphyry presents him as full of misconceptions (*VP* 7.5-7). We are not told directly whether these were related to political interests corresponding to those of Zethus, but Porphyry opposes him to Rogatianus, who, according to Porphyry, is praised by Plotinus for giving up his public career as a praetor, i.e. judge of the Roman city court (for citizens) that in effect functioned as imperial Supreme Court (*VP* 7.31-46). In a profound interpretation of Porphyry's indications during this chapter of the *Life of Plotinus*, an interpretation slightly distrustful towards Porphyry's perspective, Plotinus seems to have considered the life of Zethus nearer the perfect mean between the different kinds of political and economical excesses of Paulinus, Rogatianus and Sabinillus, whether those vices in fact happened to be cured by Plotinus or not.

Probably, therefore, the mentioned close friends of Plotinus left Rome for essentially political reasons rather than because of an epidemic,[351] even though the fact of "the plague" regarded as some kind of divine punishment undoubtedly had contributed to Gallienus' increasing unpopularity.[352] It is correct that the new Emperor Claudius II died because of a new wave of "the plague" that hit his army almost at the same time as Plotinus passed away (270 CE). However, according to his symptoms (*VP* 2.7-29), Plotinus definitely died of some other disease than "the plague", while Claudius died at Sirmium on the Sava in lower Pannonia, quite far from Rome and Campania as well.[353] The poet and critic Zoticus, a pupil of Plotinus who became blind and apparently

350. Cf. Aurelius Victor *On the Emperors* XXXIII.31-33. The son Saloninus Gallienus was killed at the same time as his father, cf. *Augustan History*, *The two Gallieni* XIX.1 and the half brother of Gallienus, Valerian Junior, who was made official consul in 265 CE, was killed in 268 CE as well, cf. *Augustan History*, *The two Valerians* VIII.2, *The two Gallieni* XII.1, XIV.9-11, Eutropius *Abbreviated History of Rome* IX.11.1 and Johannes Zonaras *Abridgment of History* XII.26.

351. Cf. Wundt (1919) 43-45, while Heinemann (1921b) 500 agrees that it is quite possible.

352. Cf. Aurelius Victor *On the Emperors* XXXIII.5-6, Orosius *Histories against the Pagans* VII.22.1-2.

353. The disease of Plotinus was more likely tuberculosis, for instance, than leprosy, which has a far longer course, cf. Grmek (1992) 353. On the third wave of "the plague" that hit Claudius II and his soldiers in 270 CE, cf. Zosimus *New History* I.46.2.

predeceased him due to ill-health (*VP* 7.12), presumably did not suffer from "the plague" either.

Plotinus' plan to found a "Platonopolis", a city governed by Plato's laws (likely to be closer to the ones in the *Laws* than in the *Republic*) was presented to Emperor Gallienus. Some infer that this was done in 267 or 268 CE, shortly before the fall of the emperor. They are perhaps a little too keen on the hypothesis that the same circles who hindered the city's becoming a reality were the people who later brought Gallienus to his fall.[354] In short, this hypothesis is not necessary; there might easily have been other reasons why the plan failed. The city was to have its site in Campania, in the province where estates of several of Plotinus' friends were situated, and at a place possibly inhabited by philosophers once upon a time. Historically, Greek philosophers like the Eleatics and the Pythagoreans sympathetic to Platonists had been politically active in Southern Italy before.[355] It is probably true that no other emperor of the third century CE than Gallienus could have considered supporting the plan, but the plans for a Platonopolis were overturned, Porphyry writes, by a courtly intrigue (*VP* 12.9-12). So we can conclude that it was not a strict senatorial intrigue.

Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli rightly points out that the friends (*hetairoi*) eventually helping Plotinus to establish Platonopolis according to Porphyry (*VP* 12.9) correspond to the friends and helpers sought for by Plato to make society and politics far more philosophical according to the Platonic *Seventh Letter* (325d)[356] – as society according to the *Republic* (369b-c) was made to enable particular persons to help each other escape their fragility, and, paradoxically, to become stronger and more autonomous by living together. Higher

354. Cf. Wundt (1919) 39 and de Blois (1976) 86-87. De Blois (1976) 145 thinks that Gallienus intended financial support. There is no evidence for this view. The necessary political support was missing, and this was enough to prevent the city from becoming reality, i.e. preventing any other possible financial support from pupils and friends from being given.

355. Heinemann (1921a) 121 stresses the continuity between Pythagoreanism and Neoplatonism in social respects and thinks the Platonopolis could only have been planned as a continuation of a Pythagorean community. Different suggestions of the projected sites have been made by R. Schoene as referred in the 1883 *CIL* X.2 p. 1006, Sogliano (1915) 512, Cantarrella (1937), Della Valle (1938-39), Accame (1980) 35-36, Pugliese Carratelli (1980), Castrichino (1980) 30-33, Accame (1982), Pugliese Carratelli (1984), Gigante (1986) 92-95 and Càssola (1995), e.g., Pompeii, Herculaneum, Vescia or Pagus Vescinus (only 4 km distant from Suio Forma, cf. note 318 above), Cumae and (near) Dicearchia (i.e. at Puteoli).

356. Cf. Pugliese Carratelli (1947) 65 n. 2.

degrees of autonomy for all can be reached through the practice of philosophy. It is quite another thing whether Pugliese Carratelli is right that the citizens of the Platonopolis were all supposed to be philosophers.[357] If that were the case, help from the emperor would hardly be needed. A philosophical *sûnoikêsis* of a kind was in fact established by Plotinus and friends using the neighbouring estates of Zethus and Castricius Firmus in Campania. So it seems that the Platonopolis, the failing project, was supposed to comprise people other than just philosophers. Rist realistically points out that Platonopolis was not meant to be a town for philosophers only, a philosophical monastery,[358] but instead the foundation of a real city with all ranks included.

Rist is not necessarily correct that the rest of the city was only meant to support and feed the philosophers in their contemplation, according to the Aristotelian ideals taken from the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Instead, it is more plausible that the philosophers played a less dominant role, but a dominant one nevertheless, like the one mentioned in Plato's *Laws* (908a, 909a, 951d-952c, 960a, 961a-962d, 964e-965a, 968a, 969b, cf. *Critias* 120a-c) and the *Epinomis* (992d-e), ascribed to Plato, where the rulers in the Nocturnal Council were meant to be philosophers like Plotinus and his pupils, fundamentally ruling on the basis of law-abiding merit.

Far beyond that, however, in IV.3.4.31-33 Plotinus makes an interesting comparison of the World Soul with a gardener anxiously tending a plant (cf. *Euthyphro* 2d) and a physician ministering to a body (*Euthyphro* 13d, cf. *Laws* 902d, 905e, 961e-962a). Again (as in the *Euthyphro*), this caring for others is compared with the ideal healthy citizen who is at the service of his neighbours in theory as well as in practice (I.2.5.25-31, I.2.6.8-11, I.4.11.12-13, II.9.9.44-45), since the healthy man must perform this duty like a sick man who has to care for his ailing body (III.2.5.7, cf. *Republic* 520d-521b). An ideal is presented here of mutual cooperativeness between men not necessarily equal in responsibility towards society from the outset, but at least all potentially sharing the same responsibility, since "all men have all the powers" (IV.3.6.33-34, cf.

357. Cf. Pugliese Carratelli (1946) 19 n. 4 and Pugliese Carratelli (1947) 65.

358. The verb used in *VP* 12.9 *anachôrêsein*, "to retreat", does not necessarily mean retiring to any cloister as de Blois thinks (1976) 192. Moreover, *anachôrêsein hûpischneito* does not necessarily mean that Plotinus "promised to retreat" as de Blois (1989) 81 says. Plotinus was hardly forced by anyone to do something he wished to do himself beforehand (*boulêma* in *VP* 12.9-10). Armstrong's 1966 translation "he undertook to move there" is more to the point. The combination is best, however, "he undertook to retreat there", understood not as obedience to someone on earth but rather as obedience to an ideal order.

VI.7.6.18, I.1.11.1-8). It seems rather like Plotinian individualism far beyond any traditional Platonic or Aristotelian political philosophy. This was perhaps the ideal laid down in the planning of Platonopolis as well.

In a time of decreasing population,[359] a town or city like this surely could only become populated overnight by veterans. After a long military service – especially in the time of the soldier emperors – they would tend to be troublesome and would perhaps not easily subject themselves to somewhat higher – though for common sense incomprehensibly philosophical – reasons for controlling their behaviour. Rist is probably correct in assuming that this was the reason why the project capsized and, realistically, would have capsized no matter who the emperor was at the time.[360]

However, it is interesting to note that Plotinus had an unequivocal political project.[361] Indeed, he tried to turn his friends away from politics in Rome, the city of the world,[362] but perhaps this was only to dedicate them to a city on a reduced scale. There might have been realpolitical reasons for this, since Rome had become too unstable. Plotinus had seen the frontiers bleed and enough emperors take charge just to disappear or be killed soon afterwards (cf. the oracle in *VP* 22.31-32 telling the late Plotinus about the times "when you were struggling to escape from the bitter wave of this blood-drinking life"). From his experience of these circumstances he could have developed philosophical reasons why those circumstances were so. He might also have tried to find out what could have made the political situation more stable. It is to this endeavour that we shall now turn.

359. Cf., e.g., Zosimus *New History* I.37.3.
360. Cf. Rist (1964a) 171-73 and Rist (1967) 13-14.
361. In a short note to *VP* 12.3, Brisson (1992b) 259 suggests that Porphyry's report on this project could owe something to Plato as a literary model, since, according to Diogenes Laertius III.21, Plato had asked Dionysius II a second time for a territory and for some people to live according to his laws. Contrary to previous promises, however, Dionysius did not keep his word. Some elements in Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* could surely be deconstructed and reduced to genre, fiction and literary models in this way, although, in this case, the story bears some significant and peculiar historical traits that seem to make it unlikely, cf., e.g., notes 354 and 358 above.
362. Talbert (1984) 25 thinks that the retirement of Plotinus' friend Rogatianus could be due to reasons of health only, namely his obesity referred to by Porphyry.

Chapter III.B

Political philosophy

There is no doubt that Plotinus had experience from the *Realpolitik* of his day as inspiration for some of his many analogies, as Jerphagnon has shown, mainly his copious use of military metaphors. Still, it would be too narrow-minded to think that his intention in using these metaphors was essentially one of *Realpolitik*, of influencing the politics of his day, though they might even have had that as a consequence. One can go too far in one's historical interpretation of the political assertions in Plotinus and consequently forget the philosophy behind them all.[363] Neither his general philosophy nor his

363. Beierwaltes (1985) 24-31 and 111 n. 103 is critical towards both of the two extremes of not recognising any political interest in Plotinus [cf. Beierwaltes (1995) 98] or else nearly reducing Plotinus biographically to *Realpolitik*. The latter tendency he sees in Jerphagnon (1982), who sarcastically compares the Apollonian oracle's words on Plotinus as being "mild and gentle" (*aganos […] kai êpios*, *VP* 23.1-2, cf. 13.5-10) with some of his militant metaphors.

The debate between the German scholar Beierwaltes, now an emeritus professor of the Munich University, and the French scholar Jerphagnon exhibits some historical irony. There is little doubt that some of the same violent traits in Plotinus' metaphors pointed out by Jerphagnon appealed to German researchers back in the quite realpolitical 1930s and 1940s, among them above all the great Plotinus scholar and translator Richard Harder, who was involved in Alfred Rosenberg's university branch of Nazism, cf. Losemann (1977) 62, 64-66, 101, 139-73 and Losemann (2001) 87.

Schmitz (2001) 478-79 refers to the work of L. Klages *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* I-III (Leipzig 1929-32) as a sort of philosophical support for Nazi vulgar vitalism and irrationalism. However, the Nazis only stayed in power because their government was bolstered with strong strands of ideology from radical conservatives, who did not consider themselves irrational but rather believed in some sort of restoration of either determined elitism or suprarationalism, or both. Within these influential circles, Hitler's dictatorship was alluded to as the Third Reich, i.e., in eschatological terms, the promised →

→ empire of the Holy Spirit. The German translator of Plotinus, Richard Harder, and the editor of the contemporary jubilee Hegel edition, Hermann Glockner, in varying degrees both belonged to this segment of conservatism, which under the circumstances practically conflated with Nazism, and both of them became members of the Nazi party. A narrow connection exists between their fields. In his hybrid philosophy, Hegel had identified the actualisation of Intellect (Germ. *Vernunft*) in humans with Spirit (Germ. *Geist*), whereas Harder simply employed the translation *Geist* for the Plotinian Intellect, whether actualised in humans or not, cf. also Inge (1923) viii. This misleading translation, which, additionally, being the standard translation of either *daimôn* or *pneuma*, in a Christian context implies personal traits that are essentially (in Plotinus, except as an occasional metaphor) absent from *nous* in ancient philosophy, is still frequent in German Plotinus scholarship, as for instance, in the writings of Beierwaltes, cf. Ousager (2001).

Harder, who was a professor in Kiel during his publication of the first complete German translation of Plotinus, *Plotins Schriften* I-V (Leipzig 1930-37), was in 1939 admitted as a non-resident member of the German Academy of Sciences in Berlin, at the same time as another Plotinus scholar from Sweden, Professor Gunnar Rudberg (cf. notes 420, 444 and 445 below). In 1940 and until the war was over, Harder was an appointed professor in Munich and from 1941 leader of the local "Institut für Indogermanische Geistesgeschichte" under the Rosenberg Department. During the years 1930-33, Harder had been complaining of Nazi student terror and irrationalism within academia, and was consequently nominated for expulsion in the beginning of 1934 by the chancellor of Kiel University. He consequently found a haven within the SA. When applying for the job as a leader of the institute in Munich, he expressed his willingness to publish a deceased, leading classicist's essays on the "mental illnesses" of the Jewish and Russian national souls for the use of the Nazi party. Only due to war scarcities, the necessary funds for the accomplishment of this plan were never found, cf. Losemann (1977) 144, 171-72. Even Harder's already mentioned comparison between Plotinus and Buddha still had some 'Indogermanistic' inspiration. Clearer traces of this approach to Plotinus can be found in the weighty work of Harder's academic SS pupil Otfrid Becker *Plotin und das Problem der Geistigen Anordnung* (Berlin 1940) – who fell in Poland the same year – and at the same time in Italy in the book published by a group of Fascists led by S. Caramella *La filosofia di Plotino e il neoplatonismo* (Catania 1940).

Becker interprets Plotinus' philosophy as a worship of life, and this would fit well into Nazism and Fascism alike, within which a narrow connection between life and violence was to be pre-understood. Previously, in Ousager (1995b) 143 n. 67 I have tried to show that interpretation of Plotinus to be a mistake, because life is to be considered a species or qualification of motion in Plotinus. Correspondingly, Plotinus does not excuse imperialism or racial extermination. He sees war, violence and death as only an exterior, ulterior necessity of life in the sensible realm, and surely not as the very Janus-face of life such as it was conceived to be by the Nazis. For instance, the fervent Nazi professor Hans Oppermann, who had written his doctoral thesis on Plotinus [part of it appearing in Oppermann (1929)], published a compendium on ancient anti-Semitism for the Nazi party in Munich as late as 1943, legitimizing the contemporary Holocaust. After the war, he paradoxically became known for works on ancient humanism, cf. Malitz (1998).

Historical phenomena like these are explained by Plotinus in III.2.2.23-27: "[…] so from Intellect which is one, and the formative principle which proceeds from it, this All has arisen and separated into parts, and of necessity some became friendly and gentle, others hostile and at war, and some did harm to each other willingly, some, too, unwillingly […]."

→

political philosophy change very much through time, irrespective of whether the emperor is called Valerian, Gallienus or Claudius II, the three emperors during his authorship. One can at most speak of small oscillations in the emotional expressions of the same strands of thought.[364]

Since Plotinus considered himself to be a systematic exponent of Plato's philosophy, it is unlikely that he ignored the political consequences of Platonic ontology or henology, not only with reference to Plato's time but as much to his or to any other time. Though one should not neglect the historical circumstances of Plotinus' teaching in imperial Rome, the clearest of the political suggestions in the *Enneads* are best understood from his very systematic interpretation of Plato, an interpretation that could not and has not left out political passages or whole works, nor omitted an attitude towards Plato's political aspirations and inspirations above all from Protagoras, Heraclitus and Pythagoras. Just like these three, other philosophers and other philosophic traditions besides those of Plato and Platonism – i.e. Aristotle, Epicurus, Cynicism and the Stoa – are naturally exploited by Plotinus where they are useful for his renewed Platonic purposes.

Plato lets Socrates give quite a wide definition of politics in the *Gorgias* (464b, cf. 504d-e):[365]

→ The Second World War was over long before the Nazi interpretation of the Neoplatonist Plotinus was fully developed, although it had been slightly foreshadowed by M. Wundt in *Plotin: Studien zur Geschichte des Neuplatonismus* (Leipzig 1919) 36-57 and in his *Deutsche Weltanschauung: Grundzüge völkischen Denkens* (Munich 1926, published by J.F. Lehmanns Verlag, which was to publish leading Nazi writings) 41, 48, 105, 112. Beforehand, however, the underlying corresponding interpretation of Plato had been sufficiently put forward by prominent Nazis, cf., e.g., Hoernlé (1938). At the Nazi takeover, a professor of philosophy at the University in Berlin who enjoyed world-wide esteem, probably Nicolai Hartmann, stated that now for the first time the Platonic ideal of a state was going to be realised, cf. Morrow (1941) 105. All circumstances considered, this was presumably a hope much more than a description; in retrospect Brecht (1942) 82 apparently had a foreboding thereof, narrating the Plotinian plans of a Platonopolis, which were never fulfilled, and the sudden death of the political leader expected to fulfil them.

364. Cilento (1971) draws notice to some of these variations. Though the realpolitical, proto-Nazi tendency in Wundt (1919) is exaggerated and the Communist views of Katz (1957) are similarly totalitarian and distorting, they have actually been the most explicit positive voices for a political philosophy in Plotinus until fairly recently. Cf. notes 310 and 363 above and notes 377, 383, 387 and 445 below. Despite his assertion that Plotinus had no systematic political philosophy p. 235, Helm (1995), for instance, tries nevertheless quite freely to extract and suggest a few Plotinian political views and apply them to the modern world at large.

365. Cf. Erler (2002) 390 n. 17 referring to the *Gorgias* (504d-e).

> Now let me see if I can explain my meaning to you more clearly. There are two different affairs to which I assign two different arts (*technas*): the one, which has to do with the soul, I call politics (*politikên*); the other, which concerns the body, though I cannot give you a single name for it offhand, is all one business, the tendance of the body, which I can designate in two branches as gymnastics and medicine.

In the same manner as Plato's metaphysic (cf. *Phaedo* 80a, *Symposium* 209a-e, *Statesman* 293c, 300c, *Philebus* 58b-d [repeated by Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1177b31-1178a3] etc.), the Neoplatonic metaphysic of Plotinus turns out to be political in itself. For Plotinus, everything depends on Truth, true being, guaranteed by the One, itself beyond all true Being. This true Being in Intellect is more or less adequately depicted in the hypostasis of Soul, a delineation that by necessity encompasses this whole temporal and spatial world and therefore also the entire political life of this world.

We must always consider the more or less vague political statements of Plotinus in the light of this particular tripartite metaphysical standpoint. In fact, the political statements turn out to be mainly politico-philosophical or even statements of meta-political philosophy.

III.B.1. The king

Central to much of the imagery in Plotinus is the doctrine of the King.[366] We learn about him in V.1.8.1-4, for instance, where the *Second Letter* (312e), ascribed to Plato, is quoted. If this letter is spurious, the passage is probably an imitation inspired by a similar passage in the more reliable *Seventh Letter* (342a-344b, cf. *Laws* 893b-d, 898a-b), where Plato speaks about four circles of varying degrees of knowledge surrounding the object of knowledge itself in the centre, though without alluding to any king in that connection.[367] Obviously,

366. Dörrie (1970) 219-20 dismisses the notion of "the king" as unplatonic, as it only appears in Plato's genuine writing in the *Republic* (509d) according to Dörrie. Dörrie's view is not the whole story. There is more to find in Ferwerda (1965) 156-58 and in Bonanate (1985) 138-41. The latter suffers from the same kind of exaggeration as Wundt (1919) though, cf. note 377 below.

367. Cf. the argument for the consistency of the Platonic political philosophy regarding the *Seventh* and *Eighth Letters* at least in Aalders (1972) 174. Also, G.E.R. Lloyd (1990) 174: "The letters in question stand or fall together, and probably therefore fall. However against that, as noted, the urge to rescue VII at least is strong."

however, Plotinus in V.1.8.1-4 thinks of the King from the *Second Letter* as standing for the One itself, around which another principle, Intellect, and again a third principle, the Soul, are attached. The King as a metaphysical symbol might be an old Pythagorean leitmotiv, perhaps even older than Plato.[368] In any case, it has been felt adequate to fit it into the *Second Letter*.

This royal theme does not come unexpectedly. Plato has indeed treated it several times in texts held to be unquestionably genuine. In the *Republic* (509d), Plato writes of the Good ruling as the king of the intelligible sphere and (597e) of possibly the same 'king' being number one in relation to truth and imitation, the last unquestionably being the third in the series. In the *Philebus* (28c, 30d), Plato speaks of Intellect (*nous*) – using the same word as Plotinus uses later – as the "king of heaven and earth", and the metaphor of Intellect being a sovereign or at least having a royal assent very much like that of the Persian Great King is also hinted at in the *Sophist* (235c).

Though philosophy and politics have different ends according to the *Euthydemus* (306b), Plato suggests (289d-292c), only as part of a superficial aporia, that statesmanship is the royal art, and in the *Republic* (473c-e, 520b-521b, 543a, 576e) he writes on this royal art as ideally performed by philosophers. The aim of philosophy is to learn about the transcendent origins of the world, whereas the scope of politics is the management of this world. There is no necessary contradiction between these two fields. For Plato, philosophical insight leads to political insight. The true philosophers, the dialecticians, are compared to gods and are called "kings" in the *Phaedrus* (266b-c). In fact, from a passage in the *Theaetetus* (175b-d), Plotinus and other ancient philosophers might have inferred that the ultimate goals of any human life could only be attained by acquiring this royal art. Knowledge of justice in itself apparently amounts to knowing what the true king or ruler would be like (cf. *Euthyphro* 2a).[369] This passage comes only a page before another that is obviously dear to Plotinus – on having likeness to God.

Although in the *Charmides* (156d-e), Plato refers to the man who truly knew about the significance of the soul as being the divine Thracian king Zalmoxis, in the *Statesman* (259a-d, 292e-293a) he speaks of the king or the statesman more realistically as not necessarily the same as the existing king

368. Diogenes Laertius VIII.80 on supposed works of Ocellus Lucanus, among them *On Kingship*, *On Law* and *On the Origin of the Universe*, sent from the Pythagorean Archytas of Tarentum to Plato.

369. Sprague (1976) has some further elucidation of the philosopher-king in Plato "as man of art or science, rather than as head of state."

or statesman, but rather the same as the real philosopher. In the myth, for instance, the truly Divine Shepherd or King gave order to everything (273e, 274e-275a). This royal usage is confirmed in the theodicean part of the *Laws* (902b-904a, 905e-907d), taking up the description of the Divine Craftsman (*dêmiourgos*) in the *Timaeus*, which again (19b-c, 24b-d, 26c-27b) was possibly meant by Plato to reflect the philosopher-king of the *Republic* on a cosmological scale (cf. 596b-d).[370] In the *Statesman*, he also speaks about the ideal mortal king as standing beyond any restricting law (294a, 300c-d). Under the best obtainable constitution it is clear, however, that there must be laws that restrict the kings, for these are never completely without fault (cf. *Third Letter* 315d-316a, 319d, *Eighth Letter* 354a-c). Kingship, if it truly corresponds to its Form, is the best obtainable constitution, Plato suggests in the *Statesman* (297b-c, 300e-301b, cf. *Laws* 710d-e, and the same is said a great deal more prosaically also by Aristotle in the *Politics* 1284b13-1288a32). If one does not have ideal kingship, laws such as the ones Plato had set out to construct in his *Laws* (cf. 709e-710d) are definitely necessary (*Statesman* 302e, cf. *Seventh Letter* 324b, 332e, 336a, 351c). For, as the Athenian rhetorician Alcidamas said (according to the *Symposium* 196c), "the laws are kings of society".

Plotinus acknowledges the Divine King from the *Statesman* and the *Laws* as a symbol of a metaphysical principle of higher order, which in effect makes and moulds one or more subordinated principles. The King is not only used as a symbol of the One itself but as a symbol of further analogical principles even within the same treatise (compare V.3.3.44-V.3.4.1 with V.3.12.42). According to Plotinus' Principle of Vertical Causation, the principle of higher order – with more power – cannot be affected by anything subordinated. Beings of this kind can work with ease from a standpoint of safety (IV.3.6.21-22). For Plotinus, there can be no question of its priority as presiding (*epistatoi*) for what is ordained (IV.4.16.11-12, cf. III.2.2.40-42 on Soul). He employs the same word here as was used for the function of the chairman (*epistatês*) of the city council in Athens, the Areopagus. It would be inconceivable that what has priority should have no corresponding power (IV.4.16.11-12, IV.4.35.61-62, cf. *Sophist* 247d-e, 248c, *Phaedrus* 270d). In the case of the ordinary human soul, however, the principle of higher order reads the messages of its lower parts, including the body (IV.6.3.67-68, cf. one wise man reading other men's minds in II.3.7.8-10, IV.3.18.19-22, cf. Plotinus himself in *VP* 11), and can then decide to be influenced or, instead, to act independently. Though Intellect

370. Cf. Morrow (1953-54) and Laks (1990).

(III.5.8.10-11, V.3.3.44, V.3.4.1, *archontos* in III.2.2.35, cf. *Timaeus* 48a), Soul (III.5.8.10, IV.8.2.28, II.1.4.24, IV.8.4.9, *hêgemôn* in III.5.8.7, II.9.9.32, *to hêgoumenon* in III.1.3.3, IV.2[4].2.48, cf. *hêgeisthai* in V.8.10.2 and IV.4.11.6, *archein* in V.8.13.3, II.9.7.14, *tou kratountos* in II.3.8.5, cf. IV.4.11.9) and the particular soul (V.3.4.1, IV.8.4.7-9, cf. I.1.7.16, VI.8.12.11-13) are all compared to a king, the imagery is best developed when the One itself is spoken of (I.8.2.8 & 29, V.1.8.2, V.5.3.9-20, V.5.12.26-30, II.9.9.34, VI.8.9.18-20, V.3.12.42, VI.7.42.9, *archôn* in VI.8.20.29, cf. the many examples of the epithet "lord" or "master" (*kûrios*) for the One in VI.8).

If Plotinus did not draw on any ancient Pythagorean writings on kingship, he had – among works of others, like the Stoics on the sage being the real king (*SVF* III.617) and the Middle Platonists[371] – at least the opportunity of reading some newer ones, from the first three centuries CE, from Neopythagoreans like Ecphantus, Diotogenes and Sthenidas.[372] Even when he does not mention them explicitly (e.g., *VP* 14.10-14), we cannot be certain that he had not read them or heard about them, for in any case, these Neopythagorean views were considered and are very much akin to Plato's (cf. *VP* 20.71-73).[373] Origen the Platonist was a fellow-pupil of Ammonius Saccas, who according to Porphyry (*VP* 3.24-32) was the second after Erennius to break the oath sworn together with Plotinus never to refer overtly to the teachings of Ammonius. He wrote the treatise *Hoti monos poietês ho basileus* and this was hardly simple courtly flattery of Emperor Gallienus, like "the king is the only poet", which is the way Porphyry deliberately puts it to achieve a sarcastic effect. If Origen were a flatterer, he would obviously commit a grave self-contradiction by writing the piece.[374] Though it also accords with the information given by the

371. Instead of Plato as a source for Plotinus, Dörrie (1970) concentrates on the Middle Platonists mentioning Apuleius, Numenius, Origen and Clement of Alexandria. I would like to draw attention to the partly Stoic, partly Platonic influenced Jew Philo as a possible source. Plotinus possibly read not only passages of his *On the Eternity of the World*, *On Agriculture* and *Allegorical Interpretation* but presumably also his *On the Making of the World* 17-20, where God is compared to a king, who lets His architect, *logos*, make a city, the World, according to the intelligible city (*noêton polin*) within, i.e. within His *logos*. Contradicting this, in his *On Flight and Finding* 95, the royal power (*dûnamis basilikê*) of God is however presented as secondary to His creative power (*dûnamis poiêtikê*) as an artisan (*technitês*).
372. Fragments of which have been preserved in John Stobaeus' *Anthology*, cf. Delatte (1942) 119 and the discussion of these fragments by Burkert (1972) 53-55.
373. As distinct from Edwards (1994) 144.
374. As distinct from Edwards (1994) 144 and as pointed out by, e.g., Harder (1958) 88 in the notes to his translation of *VP*.

Augustan History on the poetic skills of Gallienus in XI.6-9, it ought rather to be understood in the mentioned Platonic-Pythagorean tradition "that the King is the only creator", in a cosmological-causal sense. Origen would then be expressing a view straight away compatible with Judeo-Christian beliefs, but not with Plotinus' Neoplatonism, which reckons more creators (though all subordinated to the One).[375] Both Origen's and Plotinus' sense of the King would, however, include speaking metaphorically of him as a poet or, more precisely, a playwright. That is why it also had further psychological/metaphysical associations when Porphyry of Tyre, occasioned by his father's Phoenician name Malcus, which means "king", mentions that in Greek he was called *Basileus* by Plotinus' older pupil Amelius (*VP* 17.6-16, 20.91, 21.14). The name "Porphyry" itself refers to the traditional kingly purple dye of Tyre (Eunapius *Lives of Philosophers and Sophists* IV.1.4, cf. *Augustan History* on Gallienus XVI.4) and porphyry was the precious variety of stone from Egypt, for the use of which the imperial family was given an unconditional precedence.

One must acknowledge that in Greek the emperor – for instance, in this passage from Porphyry (also *VP* 3.17) – was referred to as *ho basileus*, the king; the reign – *imperium* – of the emperor was referred to as *basileia* (in Porphyry *VP* 4.12 and in Plotinus II.1.4.24 also simply called *archê*, since *archein* was the Greek equivalent to Latin *imperare*). This had its natural historical background in the Hellenistic kingdoms, which from the age of Alexander the Great were already influenced by Persian and other Eastern ceremonials of the sovereign. So, while real personal experiences or real history would easily serve as matter for Plotinus' vivid pictures, when Plotinus speaks about the king, he need not have been inspired by his personal experiences with Emperor Gordian's campaign against the Persians, nor by any other specific emperors. The inspiration for the metaphor could come from plain historical awareness as well – without, however, his losing a sense of consequence and the applicability for concrete historical circumstances in his time.

In chapter V.5.3, the metaphor of the king is put forward in the most explicit manner. The One is enthroned, veiled as the Great King (*ho megas basileus*) whose glorious, beautiful court advances in front simultaneously with His progress (*proodos*). Plotinus apparently reckons five ranks apart from the One itself, all arranged according to *timia* or *axia*, or, in Latin, *dignitas*, i.e.

375. O'Brien (1992a) and O'Brien (1992b) 130, n. 72 put the treatise of Origen into adequate Plotinian context with thorough discussion and severe critique of Dörrie among others. He mentions, e.g., that in Plotinus II.3.18.13 the soul is called "the last creator (*poiêtês eschatos*)".

dignity, honour or worthiness (cf. V.4.1.39-41, VI.8.7.6-7). That the One or the Good has taken refuge in the realm of Beauty is mentioned in the *Philebus* (64e), and Plotinus has obviously (cf. I.6.9.14-15) been influenced more by the *Phaedrus* (254b) with its description of real Beauty (cf. I.8.2.7-9) enthroned on a pedestal next to Moderation. The ranking is very likely meant to accord with the four circles around the centre as described in the Platonic *Seventh Letter* (342a-343a), so there is more detail or probably yet another analogy in use in Plotinus' metaphorical account of the five ranks. Five ranks of men are, for instance, enumerated in the *Phaedo* (113d-114c), and in the *Republic* (544a-d) five different kinds of societies are correspondingly listed. The further details of the analogy are due to Plotinus' usual three-partitioned hierarchy of hypostases mixed with a description like the one in the *Phaedo* of persons with more or less mastery over themselves and correspondingly, therefore, of more or less worth (cf. II.3.13.20-24, VI.8.12.11-13). Intellect is made the pedestal of the One (cf. VI.7.17.34, VI.8.7.7, IV.8.1.5, Porphyry in *VP* 23.12), and actually all the five ranks reckoned by Plotinus therefore must belong to the hypostasis of Soul, since in the metaphor they are all different kinds of men surrounding the king. First come the lesser ranks in the periphery; secondly, the greater; thirdly the more majestic (*semnotera*, as appears from III.7.2.6-8: this as well as other predicates cannot be strictly used to designate the king himself, cf. *Parmenides* 142a); fourthly, the court with still more royal dignity (*basilikotera*); and fifthly, the ones who are honoured the most after the king. In the end, the great king of kings reveals himself to all those who have passed through the ranks to him and who did not give up by turning themselves into something less (cf. VI.8.8.8, VI.8.9.18-21, VI.7.42.8-12, *Sophist* 249a, *Second Letter* 312e-313a).[376] And they all pray and prostrate themselves before him in an outspoken Eastern fashion (V.5.3.13).[377]

376. Cf. VI.7.39.28-34: "But He [the One] will stand still in majesty (*alla semnon hestêxetai*). Plato did say, speaking of Substance, that it will think, but would not stand still in majesty; he used 'will stand still' because he could not explain what he meant in any other way, and he considered more majestic and truly majestic that which transcends thought." Plotinus here perceives the phrase in the *Sophist* (249a) "it does not have Intellect (*noun ouk echon*)" as referring to the One, while he considers it a deliberate oxymoron, when Plato rhetorically expects that something "would stand still in immobility (*akinêton hestos einai*)". For in Plato according to Plotinus' interpretation, Stillness refers to Intellect, while immobility (*akinêsia*) refers to the One, cf. V.1.6.25, III.2.4.14.

377. Wundt (1919) 42 partly persuades Heinemann (1921b) 500 to think the metaphor is inspired by and describes the ten-year anniversary for the reign of Emperor Gallienus in 263 CE (when Porphyry arrived in the city, *VP* 4.1-3, 5.1-5), cf. the informative but unreliable *Augustan History*, *The two Gallieni* VII.4-IX.6:

→

This *proskûnêsis* (mentioned in the *History* of Herodotus I.135) was a practice taken over by Alexander but not favoured by Alexander's Macedonian generals (Plutarch *Life of Alexander* LIV-LV, Arrian *Alexander's Campaign* IV.10-14) and a humiliating practice that would not have been accepted voluntarily by the republican Romans of the time of Cicero. Later, at a time when also the principate had been superseded by a more or less sacral absolutism, i.e. the dominate, customs had probably changed, even in the city of Rome (cf. *proskûnêsis* in Pseudo-Aristides *To the King* 19 & 35). Emperor Antoninus Pius (131-68 CE) wrote of himself as "lord of the world (*tou kosmou kûrios*)". Since his reign at least, the emperor was often referred to even by citizens in Latin as well as "our lord (*dominus noster*)", and since the reign of Emperor Severus (193-211 CE) quite often so as observed from inscriptions. On a quasi-official series of coins, Emperor Aurelian (270-74 CE), who made his accession the same year as the demise of Plotinus, was presented as an official "god and lord (*deus et dominus*)."[378]

→ After slaughtering the soldiers from Byzantium, Gallienus, just as if he had achieved something great, hastened to Rome and convoked the patrician family fathers to celebrate his ten years anniversary with new games, with new kinds of grandiose processions, in exquisite ways of voluptuousness. […] Imitators of people such as Goths, Sarmatians, Francs and Persians were passing by so that each group included no less than two hundred persons […]. In this manner, with the group (*<g>rex*) of Persians some were in the procession as if they were taken captives (a ridiculous thing), and some spongers messed with these Persians, shouting themselves hoarse at everyone and examining everybody with a stern, glaring look. Those who asked why they acted with such artificiality, they answered: "We are searching for the father of the emperor."

It is tempting to see the father of the Emperor Gallienus sought for among the Persians as playing the same role as the One in the image of Plotinus, as he calls the One the Father in several other passages. This would indeed be amusing but also far-fetched, however. If Wundt were right, we would have to presuppose either that this tall story really reflects historical details known by Plotinus independently or that Plotinus knew the story from *The two Gallieni* or indeed the essence of it. (Probably, he did not experience it directly while away in Campania during his regular summer holiday, cf. *VP* 5.1-5.) Whether a Roman hoax or already a written story, such a reference would be quite absurd for his serious metaphor. Dörrie (1970) 231 instead declares rightly the metaphor of Plotinus as having general philosophical significance. In any case, as distinct from Thesleff (1980) 107, Plotinus in fact – and not just possibly "might well have" – used a simile, which connotes the Roman Emperor rather than any other worldly ruler in the centre.

378. Cf. Neumann (1905) 1308-09, Alföldi (1928) 57. A stark case of prostration is presented by the relief in Bishapur (in the Fars province) of Sapor I gaining his triple victory over Roman emperors: Emperor Gordian III fallen or prostrated under the hooves of the mounted Sapor's horse, while Emperor Philip the Arab is pleading for peace on his knees

In Plotinus, nevertheless, the custom of *proskûnêsis* can easily be taken as a cliché originating from Greek literature that is far older than, e.g., Philo *On the Special Laws* (I.31) or Dio Chrysostom *To the People of Alexandria* (XXXII.32), which bear only vague resemblance to the image in Plotinus – from authors who inferred from the fact that the subjects of the Persian king were spoken of as slaves of the king that the Great King was worshipped as a god.[379] Plotinus does not actually make this mistake. In Plotinus, the Great King, the emperor, is the symbol of God or the One. We must conclude from the expression referring to the One as the "king of the king and the kings" (*basileus basileôs kai basileôn*), that the emperor only rules by the grace of God or the One (V.5.3.20).[380] In fact, Plotinus easily found a pure Platonic model for his metaphor in the *Laws* (693d-e), where the Persian monarchy is mentioned as the main example of kingship, indispensable as one of the two matrices for any constitution whatsoever (cf. *Theaetetus* 175c, *Sophist* 235c, *Statesman* 300e-301b). Monarchy or a favourable version of autocracy is considered the Platonic political ideal simply because the One is the Good as well as the Self, whereas, on the level of Intellect, truth is considered as one, and it must be considered a plain tautology that truth and knowledge of the truth alone should reign the world (VI.7.34.27-28, VI.8.6.38-39), cf. *Philebus* (58c-d, 65c-d, 66b), *Laws* (730c) and *Crito* (48a):

> We should not then think so much of what the majority will say about us, but what he will say who understands justice and injustice, the One (*ho eis*), that is, and the Truth itself.

→ in the foreground and Emperor Valerian, taken prisoner by the king's own right hand, stands mortified in the background, cf. Ghirshman (1962) 156-57, figures 197 & 199.

379. Cf., partly, Alföldi (1934) 101 with n. 8 and as distinct from Ensslin (1939) 363, who is probably inspired by Wundt (1919) 42, cf. note 377 above.

380. In Alexandria, Caesarion, the son of Caesar and Cleopatra, had been given the title "king of kings", cf. Plutarch *Life of Antony* LIV, Cassius Dio *Roman History* XLIX.41.1-2. Probably this title was a Hellenistic borrowing from Urartu through Achaemenian Persian (cf. Wiesehöfer (1996) 55) and, further back, Babylonian tradition, as, e.g., used of Nebuchadnezzar in *Ezekiel* 26.7 and *Daniel* 2.37, and used similarly of Jesus Christ in *Apocalypse* 17.14 and *First Letter to Timotheus* 6.15-16. The title "king of kings" was also reported concerning Sapor I on his trilingual inscription of victory, cf. Maricq (1958) 305, and King Odaenathus of Palmyra felt entitled to it, when, after the abduction of the Roman Emperor Valerian, he drove away Sapor and the Persians from Syria again on behalf of Valerian's son, Emperor Gallienus. The title "great king" is of Median, Mesopotamian origin, cf. Wiesehöfer (1996) 55, but the two titles were readily combined; e.g., Dio Chrysostom *On Kingship* II.75 called Zeus "the great king of kings".

In the same vein, Plotinus (V.5.3.18) calls the king *tês alêtheias basileus* and when the king stands for the One, it refers to the One's rule of Intellect, being "the King of Truth". As we have seen above, like the Persian king (cf. *First Alcibiades* 122a), the One is neither slave nor subject to anyone, least of all himself. Because of an ambiguity in the words and the metaphor itself, one could also take the expression as describing the ideal Platonic worldly king or emperor. One might even translate it, not only with an objective, but also a subjective genitive, as "the truly king" or "the king ruling by virtue of truth", truth – or Intellect – being the connecting link between the Divine King, the One, and the earthly king; in Rome, the emperor.

Ideally, in Plotinus (III.3.2) the king will weave his society together just like the Divine King (here understood as Soul or Intellect) weaves the world together in Plato's *Statesman* (279a-b, cf. the Divine, Weaving Artificer of Names in the *Cratylus* 387d-390b, 390d-e, 393a, 438c and also the Divine Craftsman as name-giver in the *Timaeus* 73d, 78e). Obviously, if this metaphor of weaving holds good for the Divine King, so it must for the ideal worldly king, and again for all other statesmen of the world. They must acquire a kingly character (cf. *Phaedrus* 253b, *Republic* 445d).

Similarly, what Plotinus says about the best administration (*dioikêsis*) of everything being done by the World Soul from within the world, treating it as a natural whole, must also be the ideal for any worldly statesman, even to the extent that the statesman would confuse the Soul with the only real God, the One (I.2.2.23-26). Nature behaves and rules from within according to Aristotle's *Physics* (198b10-199b34), and Plotinus (IV.4.11.1-7) contrasts it with ruling as a physician (one of Plato's favourite comparisons for ideal rulers); the contrast lies in the fact that the physician can only consider separate parts at a time and therefore will easily get confused. At the same time, although it is preferable to stay independent of the ruled because practical human actions are only human (III.2.8.7-13, III.3.3.3-17), the human ruler at best should tend to behave more like a physician (cf. VI.8.5.19-20) than as a natural all-encompassing cause. In this, however, Plotinus is not contradicting himself or his usual model and master, Plato, in his verdict of Nature as subordinate to the Soul and its art or craftsmanship (*Laws* 892a-b). Plotinus is probably giving a Platonic rendering (cf. *Laws* 902d, 903c, 905e) of Aristotle's statement (*Physics* 199b29-31):

> If purpose, then, is inherent in art, so is it in Nature also. The best illustration is the case of a man being a physician to himself, for Nature is like that – agent and patient at once.[381]

381. Elements of the trans. have been taken from the explanatory trans. of P.H. Wicksteed & F.M. Cornford.

Perhaps we get a glimpse into Plotinus' position in the time of Gallienus' reign as belonging to the *amici principis*, when, inspired by the *Phaedrus* (246b-c), he explains how some souls with a kingly character (253b) will rule together with the World Soul in heaven, just as those who are living together with a ruler of the world can participate in his government (IV.8.4.7-9, IV.8.7, cf. IV.8.2.19-24, V.8.7.33-35). Perhaps Plotinus at some time really felt himself to be a part of Gallienus' unofficial council, just as, apparently, Plato's pupil Euphraeus had been adviser to Perdiccas of Macedon, Speusippus had been to Philip, Aristotle and the Cynic Onesicritus had been to Alexander the Great, the Stoics Athenodorus and Arius Didymus had been to Emperor Augustus, the Stoic Seneca had been to Emperor Nero and, again, the "Cynic" Dio Chrysostom had been to Emperor Trajan, or the Stoic Marcus Aurelius had been to himself as emperor.[382] We must remember that Plato's Academy among allied interests was a school for future kings in accordance with the command in the *Republic* (473c-d) that either philosophers are to become kings or kings are to become philosophers. As it appears from the Platonic *Seventh Letter* and the way Plato's life turned out, after he had stated in the *Meno* (99e-100a) and the *Republic* (368a-b, 580b-c) some threats against the existing political order, he opted rather for the latter alternative (perhaps reflected in the Platonic *Theages* 125a-b as compared to the model for this passage in the *Republic* 568a-b). Among the pupils at the Academy were, for instance, three kings from Asia Minor, Erastus and Coriscus of Scepsis and then Hermias of Atarneus (cf. *Sixth Letter*), for whom Aristotle was invited to work some years before he went off to bring up the young Alexander (cf. Diogenes Laertius V.3-4 & 9-10). It was a Platonic tradition that was still kept explicitly alive in the case for enlightened instead of irrational kingship made by Leibniz' faithful follower Christian Wolff.[383]

Porphyry's story of the political connection between Plotinus and the emperor (*VP* 12), whether or not it truthfully reflects the facts, probably follows the pattern of Plato's life. The point is not that Plotinus tried to become

382. Crook (1955) does not list Plotinus as any possible counsellor or friend of any emperor, nor does Rawson (1989).

383. Today the opposition to the later Führer ideology of the Nazis suggests itself, cf. C. Wolff *Le philosophe-roi et le roi-philosophe* (Berlin 1740) with an "anonymous" editor, trans. by J. Des-Champs from the Latin, Wolff (1730). At the same time, Wolff owes much to the ancient tradition of ruler panegyric in Xenophon, Dio Chrysostom and Pseudo-Aristides. He refers to the presentation of philosophical kingship in the case of China from his *Oration on the practical philosophy of the Chinese lectured solemnly as a panegyric* (Oratio de Sinarum philosophia practica in solemni Panegyri recitata, Halle 1726). As a qualifying demand on this approach, Plotinus attacks superficial panegyrists in V.5.13.11-17.

emperor or imperial, but that he tried to make the emperor or the empire philosophical. Perhaps Plotinus' comment "and, as if they were tired of being together, they each go to their own" (IV.8.4.11-12) refers to both Dionysius II's separation from Plato and Emperor Gallienus' separation from Plotinus, sarcastically implying (IV.8.4.12-21) that the political ruler rather than the philosopher has separated from the public spirit of World Soul.

A question that remains much more speculative is whether one could possibly interpret Plotinus' remark witnessed by Porphyry (*VP* 10.35-36) that "They ought to come to me, not I to them" in a way that not only covers lower spirits but even the emperor as well, to the extent that he or his office was considered divine (cf. II.1.4.24), himself a half-god aspiring for apotheosis after death, and, according to Plotinus, at least guarded by a spirit, like everybody else (III.4.3). This would not be too far removed from the usual style of Plotinus' writings where he daringly extracts unexpected vigorous signification out of old Platonic metaphors. It would have been less modest, though it would have been justified in so far as Plotinus could really consider himself as standing in the same relation to the emperors as Plato was to Dionysius II of Sicily, as indicated in the *Laws* (710c-d) and according to the *Second Letter* (310e). The rule stated there says that great insight and great power pursue, seek and, at least for a while, must meet. Porphyry connects the incident with the guardian spirit of Plotinus having shown itself to be nothing less than a god (*VP* 10.15).

This is not altogether clear in Porphyry's presentation, probably because Plotinus' statement was intended to be enigmatic and ambiguous. In any event, Plotinus might have rightly referred to what Plato writes in his *Statesman* (259a-d, 292e-293a) and suggests in the *Meno* (100a) as well as what is expressed in a few of the Platonic *Letters* (*Seventh* 326a-b, *Second* 310e-311b, cf. *Eighth* 353e-354b) that a private man who is a philosopher has just as much right as the ruler, the king, to call himself a statesman, if he is able to give the ruler useful advice for his government of the city-state.

Just as there are men who are wrongfully famous though they ought to be disreputable (like Herostratus, cf. II.3.14.21-24), there are men who are allotted posts as officials or statesmen wrongfully. It depends on whether those who nominate the officials and statesmen, for instance, those who appoint the king or the emperor, are sufficiently virtuous to make the right choice. If the choice is not right, this is usually due to the appointee's willingness to by-pass the impartial criteria due to corruption of some sort, or to bribery, or to taking advantage of his friendships and connections to acquire a lead-

ing position that does not belong to him (II.3.14.12-15 & 24-27, cf. *Republic* 434a-b, *Statesman* 301d-e). Consequently, this can harm and cause fatal damage for everybody else (cf. *Philebus* 49b-c), and an evil ruler can do the most wrongful of things (III.2.6.14-15).

As a general psychological rule, Plotinus states that when one longs for the good, it often involves evil (III.5.1.64-65, cf. III.2.4.20-21). There is considerable risk involved, for the intellectual powers of most people are too weak to know evil for certain before actually experiencing it (IV.8.7.15-17). From the experiences of evil by others, we can learn a good deal (II.3.18.5-8). In a political context, and in accordance with Plato's views in the *Statesman* on the king, it is important to know that he who rules without laws in the real world will become a tyrant (301b-c); or, is a tyrant from the start but manages to make his subjects believe that he, despite ruling without binding laws, is the real king who wants the best for all using any means available (302e). Both Plato and Plotinus tell us that such tyranny involves risking absolute evil, though there might be some positive side effects (cf. II.3.18.1-8).

III.B.2. Inequality of worth

Concerning the greater worthiness of the ideal king, one remembers the tradition of the earlier quite elitist statements of Heraclitus: "One man counts for thousands, if he is good" (DK 22B49) and (104):

> What understanding or intelligence have they? They put their trust in popular bards and take the mob for their teacher, unaware that most people are bad, and few are good.

Probably these statements are inspired by Bias of Priene (cf. DK 22B39), who was regarded as one of the Seven Sages. They are reflected, for instance, in Plato's *Euthydemus* (307a):

> […] don't you know that in every line of life the stupid are many and worthless, the serious are few and worth everything?

Plato in both the *Gorgias* (508a) and in the *Laws* (757a-758a) distinguishes more carefully between the just, proportionate sense of equality concerning

correspondence between merits and status in society and the fundamentally unjust equality of persons, when they are treated as numerical quantities assigned their status by lot. The first sense of equality is the one closely associated with the epistemology of Forms as presented in the *Phaedo* (74a). The Form of equality appears to be derived from the Form of Sameness (cf. VI.1.6.17-21), while the Form of numerical equality is only vaguely derived from it, as is also the Form of qualitative similarity (IV.4.17.35-37).[384]

Plotinus picks up Plato's line of thought regarding meritocracy as an ideal, even stressing Heraclitus' and Plato's common point by remarking that "the larger part of mankind is villainous (*ponêros*)" (III.2.17.17-18). Even more, his metaphor of the court and the king in a procession reflects that in Rome, honour was the official measure of influence, a correlation he criticises, finding the true measure behind the variously ascribed earthly honours in the relations of persons towards Soul, Intellect and ultimately towards the One (cf. III.2.17.56-64).[385] He mentions (IV.7.15.5-6) that the practice of ascribing honours to the dead, as, for instance, the apotheosis of deceased emperors, indeed already presupposes the basic honour implied by the immortality of their souls.

Later in the same treatise as the one in which Plotinus compares the One to a king in a procession, he elaborates on the courtly metaphor when he speaks about the difference between imagined and real worthiness (V.5.12.24-30). People all too easily think that they are equal – like the Gnostics, brothers (II.9.18.17-18) – to the most worthy of all, if there is just some exterior or interior similarity. Though everything naturally has its origin in the One, it does not necessarily become equal with respect to worth. Souls are not equally beautiful, for if they were, they would all be equally wise as well, and this, they are not. They will participate differently in Intellect (V.9.2.18-22). Also, although both rational and irrational beings exist as Forms in Intellect, this does not make them equal (VI.7.8.15-17, VI.7.9.1-2 & 14-15). Some degree of inequality is simply a consequence of the differences between souls (III.2.18.1-3, III.3.3.17-24, cf. *Republic* 370a-b),[386] and Plotinus makes the

384. Cf. a kindred axiological critique of egalitarianism inspired by Neoplatonism as presented by Anton (2002).
385. On the political importance of the concept of honour in Rome, cf. Lendon (1997).
386. Cf. Vacherot (1846) 441-42.

significant statement (III.2.3.38-39, cf. III.2.17.78-79, III.2.18.1-2, III.3.3.18, II.3.13.33-34, *Laws* 757a, Aristotle *Politics* 1301a28-31):[387]

> One must not demand those to be equal that are not equal.

Regarding beauty for instance, it is usually enough to seem beautiful without necessarily being beautiful, and people have different aesthetic appearances. In this example, beauty is considered – in contrast to I.8.2.7-9 and the *Symposium* (212a) – mainly as something sensible, or at least as something of minor rank, since there is something else, the Good, which can satisfy no one if it is nothing but an appearance (cf. II.3.11.7-8, *Republic* 505d). Still, there are no limits to aesthetic imagination. People perhaps themselves think – and make others believe – that they not only possess beauty in the highest degree but are also themselves Beauty in Itself, although in the metaphysical hierarchy they are to find themselves far beneath Beauty in Itself – not to mention where they are situated in relation to the Good in Itself (I.8.15.23-29, cf. *Republic* 508e-509a, *Philebus* 48e-49a).

If it were possible for everything to be at its height at the same time, which is more than difficult in this world of different times and different spaces, the good men ought to have beautiful bodies according to their goodness (III.2.6.8-11, cf. *Timaeus* 87d). In fact, however, beauty of body is less essential than goodness or – in the sense of beauty in Plato's *Lysis*, *Symposium* or the Platonic *Greater Hippias* – beauty of soul. Plotinus says (III.2.4.20-23):

> The cause of the wrongs men do to one another might be their effort towards the Good; when they fail through their impotence to attain it, they turn against other men.

How good one will be in an absolute sense is, in Plotinus, dependent upon one's epistemic and gnoseologic stage with respect to ascent to the Good. From

387. Katz (1957) comes close to the sources, but his interpretation of them moves along quite biased lines with due references to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Love in Plotinus is interpreted basically as longing caused by a deficiency in equality of wealth. Observing Plotinus' actual views on equality arguing against the abstract egalitarianism of the Gnostics, however, the longing Katz suggests is rather envy than love (cf. I.6.5.26-31, II.9.18.42-44), cf. subsection 'III.B.9.a. Gender, sex and love' below. Rössler (1976) and de Ste. Croix (1981) 123-24 are other examples of dialectical materialist interpretations of Plotinus.

the very outset, and on any stage, we are placed by Providence not according to our worth, but in a position that is appropriate to our worth (III.2.12.9-12, III.2.17.18-25 & 32-37 & 56-64 & 75-83, III.3.5.1-8, IV.3.16.22-25, IV.4.45.39-44, II.9.9.23-25, cf. *Laws* 903b-e). We are subject to this law from within by necessity (IV.3.13.24-32).

To blame the law or its modally necessary fundament in the creative One for the apparent inequalities of creation would be absurd, since what is given is given by necessity, while, if the fault lies with the particular man instead, it would likewise be absurd to blame somebody or something else for his own shortcomings (III.3.3.9-17, cf. II.9.9.75-76).

III.B.3. The general

When a king is truly king, everyone evidently has to obey him as an epistemic and metaphysical necessity, since truth and true being are superior and essential to this world. Everyone therefore obtains the best life – and the best death – in this world by conforming to his command (II.3.13.29-31, II.3.17.16-17).[388] In the daily Roman life of Plotinus, the king or emperor was simultaneously the highest commander of the armed forces. This was what *imperium* meant, the command of placing troops at the disposal of the Roman people symbolised in the emperor. If this *princeps* did not convey the office temporarily to any other, he would be the general (Gr. *stratêgos*) in command, *imperator* (Gr. *autokratôr*, so *VP* 12.2). Unfortunately, military virtues had become the primary criterion for making new emperors in the age of Plotinus. In his sixty-six years of living in the third century CE, no fewer than seventeen emperors held power and in addition quite a number of usurpers managed to get as far as holding some provinces under their reign for some time. For Plotinus, kings seemed nearly interchangeable with generals in this world (II.3.2.16). Nevertheless, the hierarchy itself is not just a rhetorical order from the art of kingship to its reflection in administration (*oikonomia*), from the art of warfare to its reflection in rhetoric (V.9.11.21-24, cf. Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1094a27-b7, which does not mention kingship). We should rightly

388. Cf. Epictetus *Discourses* III.26.28-29, who considers God as a just general at some point ordering one to fall in the battle of life. Graeser (1972) points to several other passages where Plotinus might be inspired by Epictetus and other Stoic sources, some of which will be referred to in following notes.

suppose that the art of warfare itself is the reflection of the art of kingship, cf. *Euthydemus* (291c), *Statesman* (305a), *Laws* (905e, 961e-962a) and Odysseus in the *Iliad* II.204, quoted at the end of Aristotle's theological book XII of the *Metaphysics* (1076a4):

> Too many kings (*polûkoiraniê*) can ruin an army – mob rule!
> Let there be one commander, one master (*koiranos*) only.[389]

More lines from the referred context in the *Iliad* (II.203-07) add to the picture of true kingship as certainly implying strategic abilities. The human appropriations of these arts originate in contemplation of the Forms in Intellect, from geometry, arithmetic, astronomy and ultimately from the philosophical study of unity (V.9.11.21-26, III.1.3.25-27, cf. *Republic* 522c-e, 524d-535a, *Philebus* 56b-58a and *Laws* 819c). One will never become king or general simply by accidental material causes such as any possible effects from stars, as some believe (II.3.2.14-16).

In the same way as the king is employed as a metaphor, the general first and foremost is a symbol of something metaphysical, which is the only principle that can endow the kings and generals of this world with their actual importance. However, since the art of warfare is only a reflection of royal mastery, Plotinus never employs the general as a symbol of the One itself but, instead, at one place as a symbol of the Soul in its approaches to Intellect (II.3.13.29-31).

This is because Plotinus employs the metaphor of the general (III.3.2.5) mainly as a certain principle (a plan or law) within Intellect that determines how those entities, which arise from there but also have their share in the hypostasis of Soul, have to be assigned time and space in a pure, practical and logistical way. Otherwise, everything would have to be at once as it is in Intellect. Providence lets everything in the World Soul happen in sequential order to establish the best result possible as "Soul disposed according to Intellect" (III.2.16.10-17, III.2.1.21-22, cf. *Phaedrus* 246c, 247c-d, *Laws* 897c). One must automatically obey and follow Zeus as the "Great Leader" mentioned in the *Phaedrus* (246e), who according to Plotinus in V.5.3.21 is a symbol of the Soul hypostasis (cf. *Cratylus* 395e-396c). However, Plotinus later (III.5.8.11-

389. Epical trans. R. Fagles. The Platonists' use of Homer was not least due to his ideology of homeland and kingship in the *Iliad* and in the *Odyssey* as well. Cf. note 303 above and notes 391, 429 and 439 below.

14, cf. IV.4.9.1-3) corrects this interpretation to mean exactly a principle for both Intellect and, consequently therefore, also for Soul (cf. *Philebus* 30d), just as Zeus in one instance (VI.9.7.24) is readily considered by Plotinus to be the deputy of the One. This general does not plan the moves of only one single army but also the moves of the antagonist armies, marshalled into order (III.2.15.13-17, III.3.2, cf. *Laws* 819c, 905e).

Plotinus naturally exploits the kindred remarks of Plato in the *Republic* (522e, 525b) and the *Philebus* (56b-e) and Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* (1075a13-15) about the general being the source of all order and unity of soldiers in an army, while the opposite is declared to be quite impossible (VI.6.12.19, VI.6.13, VI.6.16.36-37, cf. VI.9.1, V.5.4.35-37, VI.2.10.3-4, VI.2.11.5-16). The comparison already works as part of a theodicean argument in Aristotle, where we read (1075a24-25) that "everything contributes to the good of the whole". For a Platonist like Plotinus, the theodicy in Aristotle appears confused, however, since Aristotle might be saying both that, on the one hand, the good of everything depends on a superordinate principle, while, on the other hand, all things together make up a good whole on their own. When Aristotle opts for the world as definitely uncreated, without any origin, it stresses his theodicean dilemma by strengthening the latter alternative considerably.

The theodicy presented in Plato's *Laws* (902b-903a) is far more systematically satisfactory for Plotinus, since here we read that the whole world is subordinated to the divine, which acts as a statesman, physician or craftsman towards the world. Being the best God, it cares not only for the great traits but also for the smallest and most particular details, i.e. in effect, also for particular persons. In addition, Plotinus might have been inspired by some of the protracted speculations of theodicy within Stoicism, taking the Master Argument of Diodorus Cronus' as their point of departure, moving from Diodorus' solution that only what becomes real are possibilities, to the solution of Chrysippus that only the best possibilities will become real. For Plotinus, Aristotle's general – a reflection of the true Statesman, the King or the One – is then again the symbol of the plan towards the best, namely for Providence.[390] The general staff is a symbol of the collection of logical reasons for the one or the other pattern of action in Soul, which directs messengers or informing principles, *logoi spermatikoi*, to work independently in Nature, contained within the hypostasis of Soul.

390. Cf. section 'II.A.4. Sufficient Providence' and chapter 'II.B. Distinguishable souls' above.

As part of a theodicy, Plotinus considers the metaphor of the general as having approximately the same Platonic background as the metaphor of the king, exactly as derived from that. This is what Plotinus must think, since in the same connection where he speaks about the "leading Principle" or Providence weaving everything together into the same causal chain in the best fashion, he also mentions the metaphor of the general (III.3.2).

The political language of Plotinus investigated until now is mainly a metaphor for metaphysical principles, but these metaphysical principles inevitably work as models for the political life taking place in Soul. For instance, a king must mirror the One and a general must mirror Providence. This mirroring relation of political life to metaphysical principles will be even more obvious in the next section.

III.B.4. The legislator

The rightful and best king knows that ideal kingship is only an ideal, and that worldly kingship will always remain corruptible, and, in the end, mortal. Therefore, he must make laws that are more than just provisional, international laws included (cf. *Laws* 645b), which can be maintained and honoured and can reduce injury and fraud. As in Plato's *Statesman* (302e), this both implicitly and explicitly lawful community is a realistic ideal for Plotinus. It appears from Porphyry's account of the Platonopolis project, constructed from Plato's *Laws*, and from the psychologically, epistemologically and ontologically conceived Homeric statements that we ought to "fly to our dear homeland" – in the beyond (I.6.8.16-21, cf. *Theaetetus* 176a-b, *Iliad* II.140 and *Odyssey* VI.315, VII.77, IX.21-36, X.483-84 & XIX.290 also reflected in *VP* 17.39, 22.25-30, cf. *Odyssey* V.398-99).[391] In such a way, just as Odysseus coming to the land of the Phaeacians or even to Ithaca, the wise man really comes by way of his contemplation to a homeland where the laws are good (*eis patrida eunomon*, V.9.1.19-21, cf. the Homeric tags of the oracle on Plotinus all through *VP*

391. Cf. words indicating that one is going to be abroad (*apodêmêtikos*), when one leaves this world in Epictetus *Discourses* I.6.24, III.24.4 & 60 & 88 & 105 and in his *Handbook* 16. However, this is actually in opposition to the usage in Plotinus, who considers being in this sensible world as being abroad from our true homeland. As this already suggests in general, inspiration from the Stoics might be necessary for Plotinus' Platonising views but far from sufficient. Cf. notes 120, 303 and 389 above and notes 392, 429 and 439 below.

22).[392] This is the path the lawgiver ideally must follow: go to meet the ideal legislator of Providence in Intellect (V.9.5.28-29, cf. *Laws* 713e-714a, 957c-d, Numenius fr. 13[393]) and act accordingly. For to act in concert with Intellect is to act in accordance with a law, either unconsciously, analogously, or by contemplation, as a cause oneself (V.3.4.1-7, VI.8.3.21-26). The law originates in the One (VI.8.10.35).

Metaphorically, this legislating god is, as in Plato's *Timaeus* (41a-42e), conceived here with what seems to be a sarcastic touch directed towards the likelihood of democratic attentiveness in this world, since the god is considered to be making public speeches (*dêmêgorein*) that everyone must automatically obey in contrast to public speeches stemming from this world, which everyone can disagree with tacitly, quarrel about loudly or even disobey (IV.8.4.38-40). Likewise, the legendary King Minos of Crete made his laws after unification with the deity Zeus, and he let his laws flow from this experience of the god (VI.9.7.23-26, I.6.7.1-24, cf. *Republic* 500b-e, *Odyssey* XIX.178-79 and the Platonic *Minos* 318e-320b), an experience that is also the aim for the walk of the three elderly men in the *Laws* (624a-b). Plotinus recommends that one should disclose the contents of such unifications to others as far as possible (VI.9.7.20-23, cf. II.9.9.43-52) – as he himself did.[394] Probably, Plotinus conceives of the unification with the "deity" here as unification with the One.[395]

392. The term 'homeland', used here and throughout this book (also in notes 120, 310, 389 and 391 above), is found appropriate by its emphasis on a gender neutral and, at the same time, the most significant connotation of the word *patris* in Greek and the kindred word *patria* in Latin. Though 'fatherland' is the literal translation and corresponding words would not be controversial in many other European languages today [e.g., Jensen (1948) 179 or Alföldi (1971) bearing the German title *Der Vater des Vaterlandes im römischen Denken*], the connotations of the term 'fatherland' with Nazism are still too strong in modern English to allow transmission of the essential meaning. The significance hereof becomes apparent in section 'III.B.8. Homeland and empire' below.
393. Just like Philo, Numenius might have accustomed his terminology to Jewish conceptions, as Armstrong writes in a note to his 1984 translation. As Plotinus shows, however, the concept of a lawgiver can be understood in a wholly Platonic way.
394. Cf. similar points in Cochez (1914) 91, Smith (1999) and Schniewind (2003) 189-91.
395. Cf. the note to this passage on the legislation of Minos in Plotinus inspired by Plato, in R. Harder, R. Beutler & W. Theiler's edition and translation of *Plotins Schriften*. It has also been pointed to by O'Meara (1992b) 507-08, O'Meara (1997a) 38-41, O'Meara (1997b) 80-81, O'Meara (1999b) 282-83, O'Meara (2003) 73-76 and in the translator, M. Chase's insightful note to Hadot (1993) 99 on the (homo-) sexual metaphor describing the unification, i.e. the unification of Minos and Zeus. Cf. subsection 'III.B.9.a. Gender, sex and love' below.

Plato's apparently weaker suggestion to lawgivers like Solon in the *Phaedrus* (278b-d) that they should understand the innermost nature of their subject would, after all, amount to the same thing for Plotinus as some sort of deification, since this opportunity is also mentioned as a precondition for making good laws in the *Symposium* (209a-e). In the *Republic* (423d-e) it is announced that the guardians (*phûlakes*):

> […] must take care (*phûlattôsi*) of "the Great One" as it is called (*to legomenon hen mega*), though "the Sufficient" (*hikanon*) would be a better expression than "Great".

Similarly, in the *Laws* (965b) it is declared that a guardian of a state must

> need the ability not merely to fix his regard on the many, but to advance to the recognition of the One (*pros de to hen epeigesthai gnônai te*) and the organisation of all other detail in the light of that recognition […].

We shall come back to how Plotinus further elaborated an interpretation of this passage a bit later.[396]

Historically, Plotinus also would have had Parmenides in mind, explicitly mentioned by him in one place as his forerunner together with Plato (V.1.8.14-15).[397] Parmenides was the lawgiver of his city Elea[398] – in Plotinus' view probably after a vision or recognition (*gnoiês* DK 28B2.7) like the ones in the *Way of Truth*. Plotinus might have considered Heraclitus' passage to the universal law (*logos*) searching himself (DK 22B101, DK 22B45), the one law, on which even the law of the city-state depends (DK 22B114), and his observation on the agreed law (*nomos*) as just as much worth fighting for as the city-wall (DK 22B44). Naturally, Plotinus would also have had associations of legislation aimed at by other philosophers worthy of serving as models like Empedocles, the Pythagoreans and, then again, Plato. In the *Philebus* (26b), it is said that the Love goddess, which as distinct from the preferred Pleasure goddess of the interlocutor Philebus (12b) is probably a synonym for the stronger Necessity of Intellect, puts Law and Order (*nomon kai taxin*) into everything. Also, since we hear in the *Cratylus* (390d) that any lawgiver is to be informed by a dialectician or philosopher, if he is to make the best laws,

396. Cf. section 'III.B.10. Efforts of individuals' below.
397. On Parmenidean traits in Plotinus, cf. Ousager (1995b-96).
398. Cf. Plutarch *Against Colotes* 1126a (= DK 28A12).

this is also the reason why the philosopher could be called the right statesman or king.

In the *Critias* (121b), Plato mentions that Zeus rules as a king through the laws. Plotinus usually conceives of Zeus as symbolising the whole hypostasis of Soul. Though he explains that nothing can escape the laws of the all (III.2.4.25-26), it is quite clear that there is a difference in how the laws of nature and the laws that men make by convention are derived from Intellect or from the One. The laws are indeed extensive (IV.3.15.14-15); they rule the hypostases of Intellect and Soul (IV.8.7.17-21) and they also extend to the descent of the particular souls, as they did in Empedocles according to Plotinus (IV.8.1.17-22, IV.8.5.10-11, IV.3.12.16-19, IV.3.13.23-32). The world is an unfolding of the legislation made by the Divine King mentioned in the *Statesman* (273e-275a, cf. *Cratylus* 387d-390b, 438c). This legislation is the same as Providence (IV.3.13, cf. III.2.9). Two principles that are actually parts of the one-and-only legislation lead Providence's adjustments of the world: law and judgement (IV.3.24.8-19, cf. VI.4.6.8-10, IV.3.3.22, IV.3.13.1-3). The description of the total insight into everything done that the judge acquires (IV.3.3.20-24) seems to be modeled after the ideal of delation in the *Laws* (856c, 907d-e, 910c, 913d-914a). In the age of Plotinus, moreover, the persistent use of imperial informers or secret police had become quite a common practice (cf. Pseudo-Aristides *To the King* 21).

According to Plotinus, there is no contradiction between the original descent into and the ascent from the cave and the judgement in the *Republic* (614c, cf. *Gorgias* 523e, *Phaedo* 107d-e, 113d), as there is no inevitable contradiction between necessity and free will either (IV.8.5.1-4, IV.3.16.13-15).[399] The inescapable law of causation says that there must be correspondence, equality even (cf. *Laws* 757a-758a), between deed and merit, between crime and punishment. This world is determined by Justice (*Dikê*) and the Inescapability (*Adrasteia*) of retribution, Plotinus writes. Regardless of whether or not the bad man understands anything of this, he is determined by it all the same (IV.4.45.27-51, III.2.13, IV.3.13.1-3, III.2.4.23-26, II.3.8.1-4, III.3.4.44-54, cf.

399. Cf. Seneca *On Providence* II.1-2, IV.8 on God as a general giving challenges to the good man and the interpretation of Hesiod's *Works and Days* 242-43 in Plutarch *On Self-Contradictions of the Stoics* 1040c (= *SVF* II.1175). As Graeser (1972) 57 remarks, Plotinus (e.g., III.2.5.15-27, I.8.15.23-24) thinks, in contrast to the Stoics, that evil works as a means for bringing about something good in nature in general, and not just as a penalty designed to bring about the good in human beings.

Timaeus 42c (and Euripides *The Trojans* 887-888), cf. *Theaetetus* 176d-e). In the *Laws* (872e, 904c-905b, cf. *Timaeus* 42b), Plato writes that Justice enforces the law, which inescapably requites all his worst deeds, and in accordance with Plato, Plotinus has brought kindred themes in elder Greek authors and Presocratic philosophers together into one. Among the latter, we find Anaximander (cf., e.g., III.2.4.23-45) saying that all things come to be, happen and pass away (DK 12A9):

> according to necessity; for they pay penalty and retribution to each other for their injustice according to the assessment of time.

Even more relevant is Parmenides who, in his *Way of Truth*, ensured by Right (*Themis* DK 28B1.28, 8.32, referred to by Plotinus, for instance, VI.9.9.56, or by Apollo's oracle in *VP* 22.29) and Justice says that Justice not only guards the gates of Being (Day) and Non-Being (Night), but, much-avenging (*polûpoinos*), also the keys of Retribution (*amoibous*). To this we must supply the doctrine of reincarnation in Pythagoras (DK 14.8a – from Porphyry *Life of Pythagoras* XIX) and Heraclitus' outspoken utterance that everything in fact is just for God. The sun for instance, will not exceed its measures, because otherwise, the Erinyes, the revenge maidens of Justice, will search it out (DK 22B94). This is unthinkable, and therefore injustice is only possible in relation to human agreements and conventions (DK 22B102). Parmenides is probably again a source with his statements about Justice (DK 28B1.28 and 8.14), who just like Necessity (*Anangkê*, DK 28B8.16 & 30) appears to determine the unity of Being. In Plotinus, Justice, however, is subordinated to the One. Finally, Justice is the One's relation to itself, its keeping self-identity with itself, in a way "paying itself its own due", so it does not necessarily imply any further multitude (I.2.6.19-23). This Justice is the very paradigm of any worldly justice as well. Plotinus accepts (V.8.4.41-42) the view of Sophocles that Justice is enthroned on the one side of God (*Antigone* 451, *Oedipus in Colonus* 1381-82), in much the same manner as when Plato in his *Laws* (715e-716a) writes that Justice as the instrument of God commits Herself to requite those who oppose the law of God.

In Plotinus, Justice and the Inescapability of retribution are therefore assumed in the law of Providence (cf. IV.3.24.8-19).[400] Indeed, all persons

400. Cf. chapter 'II.B. Distinguishable souls' above.

have the same spiritual freedom to find and observe the same divine law (II.3.15, III.2.10, III.2.17.54-59, cf. VI.4.6.8-10), while "God is blameless (*theos anaitios*)", as is announced in the *Republic* (617e), cf. also *Timaeus* (42e). The freedom and the descent of souls into this world only acquire different courses and are assigned different parts in the play of the world by way of Providence (III.2.17). One cannot blame the superior principle nor inferior, material causes like bodily fluids for the fact that some men become thieves, abductors, temple-robbers, effeminate in their doings and feelings and that they involve themselves in shameful acts (IV.4.31.50-54, cf. *Republic* 443a, *Laws* 854a-d).[401]

As an interpretation of the *Laws* (731c), but slightly corrected according to the view put forward later on in the same *Laws* (896d), Plotinus thinks these acts are in fact due to some particular intent, though perhaps not any fully conscious intent. Punishments are rightly imposed according to the character of the corresponding crime, with the eyes of Providence fastened upon the best possible order of things (III.2.4.23-44, cf. VI.4.6.8-10). So, the man who acts badly will get worse, and the man who does good will become better here and afterwards (III.2.8.26-31, III.2.9.6-10, cf. *Crito* 47d). Everybody has chosen himself and deserves his fate in one way or another in the great circle of reincarnation, as is presented in the myth of the warrior Er in the *Republic* (*hairesis biôn*, 617d-620e).

When justice is analysed as paying everybody his due, as Plato does with special elaboration of the seemingly tautological saying of the poet Simonides (fr. 642) in the *Republic* (331e) and, further, in the *Laws* (903d-e), then the one who takes what does not belong to him is necessarily persecuted by justice as if by an inescapable law (IV.4.42.17-18). For Plato (e.g., *Timaeus* 24b-c, 28a, 28c, *Laws* 887e) and Plotinus alike, the Principle of Sufficient Reason also works through laws of justice.

401. Plotinus' examples might be taken from the lives of the Emperors Valerian and Gallienus and be slightly sarcastic as Valerian was abducted for good during the war against Persia in 260 CE and Gallienus was considered effeminate by, e.g., the later Emperor Julian *Caesars* XI, if not for any other reason than possibly Gallienus' presentation of himself as a bisexual god, i.e. as the goddess Galliena on a series of coins, cf. Alföldi (1928) and de Blois (1976) 151-55. Cf. subsection 'III.B.9.a. Gender, sex and love' below.

III.B.5. War

War is considered by von Clausewitz among others as a possible consequence of politics. However, according to Plotinus, the reverse relation is more likely. When one thinks in terms of the Divine King from the *Statesman* as the organiser and lawgiver for the world, as does Plotinus (III.2.8.21), one realises that arbitrary violence and assault in this context are also expressions of the right of nature. As an indirect penalty inflicted by Providence, seemingly haphazard violence generally hits those who have become lazy in their souls – though anyone who assaults somebody ought to be punished himself. One is under obligation to preserve oneself (IV.4.24.5-8), to care for one's defence, to assert one's rights (III.2.8.13-16). Otherwise, the right of nature, the law of Providence, lets others assume control. When laziness or sumptuous living are the causes of one's not being able to defend oneself against assaults, why should not the assault in itself be an appropriate punishment? Those who behave like overfed sheep are bound to be eaten by wolves (III.2.8.21-26, cf. IV.3.28.14-16, *Statesman* 307e-308a). This image of the wolf and the sheep reflects the description of the tyrant – in contrast to the shepherd, the philosophical statesman (cf. *Iliad* IV.296) – in his relations to the common people in the *Republic* (336b-d, 343a-c, 345c-d, 416a, 440d, 565d-566a), and also from the *Phaedo* (82a), the *Statesman* (274e-275e) and the *Laws* (906a-b, 906d-e).[402]

Plotinus carries Platonic views of the sensible world to extremes in a kind of hard-boiled Heraclitean sense, relying on the evidence for this view in Plato's important *Cratylus* (440a-e), *Theaetetus* (156a-157a, 181c-182b), *Timaeus* (19b-c, 27d-28c, 49a-50a) and *Philebus* (43a, 53c, 54d). Especially important is the assertion of Heraclitus (DK 22B80):

> It is necessary to know that the war is common, that justice is strife and that everything happens by strife and with necessity.

Plotinus takes this extremely seriously. In the same manner, he interprets the principles of Empedocles (DK 31B17.7 and 26.5 etc.) on friendship and

402. Cf. Dio Chrysostom *On Kingship* I.17, II.6, III.40-41, IV.43-45, Epictetus *Discourses* IV.1.127 and Pseudo-Aristides *To the King* 22 as other indirect inspirations for this, even if they just reflect Homer and Plato. On the Platonic significance of the image, cf. Ousager (1998).

enmity, love and hate as standing for the One in its relation to the struggling manifold of this world (V.1.9.5-6). Though it remains a unity in total, there is not only friendship, but also necessary enmity and war (IV.4.40.1-6, III.2.2.4-7 & 23-26, III.2.4.16-17, III.2.15.15-17, III.2.16.31-39). In just the same way as horses and other animals are jealous and bellicose, even though they belong to the same genus and species, so are humans (III.6.9.39-41, cf. VI.7.9.38-VI.7.10.2, III.2.9.33-40). Any particular living being follows its own nature in competition with the wants of others (III.3.1.12-15, cf. IV.4.32.25-52). In the undeclared but unceasing war without armistice between animals and humans, and between animals mutually and between humans mutually – for corporeal bodies only live by their Form, species or kind (*kat' eidos*, III.2.4.11-12)[403] – it is necessary for animals to eat each other to gain further life; and for mortal humans to direct their weapons against each other and eventually die (III.2.4.16-17, III.2.15.3-39).

On closer inspection, there is, after all, a major difference between irrational aggression due to bestial instinct alone and a rightful war of self-defence that will have a reason to be fought (IV.4.28.22-63). Plotinus reflects here again (cf. IV.3.28.13-16) considerations of Plato's *Republic* (373d-374b, 375e-376b) and *Laws*, where it is said in the beginning (625e-626a, cf. *Timaeus* 19c) that "all states are by nature fighting an undeclared war against every other state", just as (626e, cf. *Republic* 559e-560d) there is even "a war against ourselves within each of us." Plotinus refers to this as a psychological law for single persons, couples and groups alike when he describes how they will only become manifest on their own by war between them (IV.3.31.4-20). This is also a cause of pain (IV.4.18.25-27).

Much of the well-acknowledged dynamism in Plotinus' system seems to have been acquired from a Platonic understanding of Heraclitus' statement (DK 22B53):

403. The reading "by their race" would suggest itself to the Nazis, cf., e.g., note 363 above, whereas Plotinus suppressed talking about his own country, parents, family or race (*tou genous*, *VP* 1.1-4). Also, unlike the later historian Zosimus (*New History* I.18.3) speaking of Emperor Philip as stemming from the "most detestable" Arabian people (*ex Arabias, ethnous cheiristou*), the Phoenician Porphyry does not record any derogatory connotations when noting that Zethus was by either family or race an Arab (*Arabion to genos*, *VP* 7.17). On the contrary; Porphyry tells us that Zethus was a close friend of Plotinus and often let him stay at his estate in Campania, which served as a hospice for Plotinus even after Zethus' own death (*VP* 2.15-22, 7.17-23). The circumstance that Porphyry explicitly notes the national lineage only of Zethus among the many persons he mentions (including Emperor Philip), probably just indicates that Arabs, as they came from the outskirts of the empire, were rare in the city of Rome.

> War is the father of all and king of all, and some he shows as gods, others as humans; some he makes slaves, others free.

Regarding Plotinus' conception of the human world at least, this is quite plausible. The next passage in Plato's *Laws* (626d-627a) might be his point of departure:

> Clinias: […] not only is everyone an enemy of everyone else in the public sphere, but each man fights a private war against himself. […]
> Athenian: Now let's reverse the argument. You hold that each one of us is either 'master of' or 'mastered by' himself: are we to say that the same holds good of household, village, and city-state? Or not?
> Clinias: You mean that they may be masters of, or again mastered by, themselves? […]
> Clinias: Again a very proper question. The facts are beyond doubt, particularly in the case of city-states.

For Plotinus, as for anyone, it appears as something bad when the good become slaves to evil masters, or if evil rulers attack and subsequently rule decent people in the city-states, cf. *Laws* (627b). Evil does in fact easily win wars and evil warlords commit terrible atrocities such as rape when they take prisoners. In fact, in the minds of law-abiding citizens, they are readily considered war criminals but, still, they act as they do on behalf of Providence (III.2.6.15-16, cf. in the categorical treatises VI.1.6.24-25, VI.1.19.18-20 & 31-41, VI.1.20.5-7, VI.1.21.5-6). Since it is those who care for their land and not those who only pray who will reap a harvest, it is also those who are best equipped with weaponry and who fight bravely who will be the victors in wars (III.2.8.32-42). War and its imminent risk of bodily death is often better than peace, if peace only means letting the evil or worse come to power (III.2.8.48-50).

There is perhaps a suspicion of Plotinus' past career in the military, when, in an otherwise purely categorical context, he asks whether the statue of a warrior, a soldier or an officer who carries a weapon is a substance in the same way as a living man will be in relation to his arms as accidental possessions (VI.1.23, cf. Aristotle *Categories* 2a3). Living warriors, however, also receive his attention, as he thinks that turning away from reason, which obviously recommends the virtue of courage, causes cowardice. Or, that one's understanding perhaps knows perfectly well what the virtuous action is but the remaining parts of one's condition make it impossible to act, just as if there

were defects in one's bodily weaponry (III.6.2.26-28 & 54-60, cf. I.6.5.12-31, III.6.3.1-16, III.6.4.8-10 & 17 & 23-26).

Thus, the evil rule because of some lack of virtue in the ruled (III.2.8.13-16). First and foremost, this lack of virtue is the cowardice (*anandreia*) of the ruled (III.2.8.50-52, cf. *Symposium* 182d). This is just, since the opposite – that cowards should rule the courageous – would be unjust (cf. *Republic* 562d) and would clash with the basic laws of survival in this world (cf. *Statesman* 307e-308a, *Laws* 690b). The universal laws, which rise from the principle of justice in the *Republic* (331e) and the *Laws* (903d-e) "that everyone is to be given his due", consequently say about survival that for many it is better to die than to live in a way they were not meant to live (III.2.8.46-48, I.4.7.42-45, cf. *Apology* 38e-39a, *Laches* 195c-d, *Crito* 47d-48b, *Gorgias* 512a-b). The Good in Plato's *Republic* and *Philebus* is definitely not taken by Plotinus to be a matter of subjective human concern only.

When Plotinus writes that no one is either born a slave or taken prisoner in war for slavery accidentally (III.2.13.11-13), some might think that he is just repeating Aristotle's conception that there are both slaves by nature and slaves against nature, cf. *Politics* (1253b1-1255b40). However, in the first place, he contradicts Aristotle's static conception of slavery by saying that everyone in consequence is made a slave by nature. This is on the other hand a contradiction of the Stoics, who said that there were no slaves by nature but only by convention.[404] Some are naturally made better off by becoming slaves (I.4.7.42-43, cf. *First Alcibiades* 135c). Secondly, allowing that the condition of slavery is historically not easily justified nor unjustified as the problem is presented in Plato's *Laws* (776b-778a), the view is put into a far more dynamic context with the general Platonic doctrine of reincarnation and the free choice of the particular person, which is open even for slaves according to the *Meno* and the *Republic*.

So, the biological starting point is not pure coincidence but depends on earlier choices, as one's later history in essence will also be (cf. *Laws* 854b, 872e-873a, *Phaedrus* 248c-249b, *Republic* 619e-620d, *Timaeus* 41e-42e, 90e-92c).[405] What appear as coincidences from the surroundings are in reality parts of the law of Providence, a law that is at once its plan in full. The war showing some as masters and others as slaves is therefore in some measure

404. Cf. Philo *On the Special Laws* II.69 & 122 (= *SVF* III.352), Diogenes Laertius VII.121-122 (= *SVF* III.355).

405. As distinct from Sharples (1994) 176, who presents the *Republic* and the *Laws* as having different views on this issue. As Plotinus indicates, they are probably compatible.

God's innocent play with the outer man (cf. *Republic* 588d-e) as a puppet (cf. *Laws* 644d-e, 803c-d, 804b), not with his inner self, which does not die. Those who "die" in the ordinary sense in wars are only anticipating slightly the death waiting for them in their old age.[406] Therefore, we are to watch murder, death and conquest and plundering of cities as things on a scene (III.2.15.15-59, cf. I.4.7.20-22).[407] Dance is one of the favourite images of Plotinus, and battles are so to speak like war dance (cf. *Cratylus* 406d-407a, *Laws* 815a). Still, the play remains one play, even if it contains manifold battles (III.2.16.31-39). We must remember that crimes, which we resist and ought to resist tooth and nail, may have certain consequences that are good not only as deterrent warnings, for instance, children begotten by rape and cities arising renewed from the spectre of siege and plunder (III.2.18.13-18, cf. II.3.18.1-8, III.2.2.26-28, III.2.5.21-25).

III.B.6. Power and wealth

So, if cities fall to evil rulers, this seems obviously unfortunate but will nevertheless be in accordance with the laws of Providence. The same is true for variations in the distribution of wealth among men. Some find it revolting that the evil can be rich, while the good are poor. Whether wealth has been distributed according to laws instituted by humans or not, or in accordance with different human conceptions of justice, the laws of Providence which are just in themselves have led to this condition (III.2.7.29-43, cf. IV.3.16).

This does not mean that human laws cannot change or adjust the circumstances; it is just that such change does not have decisive importance, since justice will work in any case. Though the thought of justice, innate or rather pre-conceived as it is, can with some considerable training develop towards grasping the Form of justice in itself, there is a remarkable difference between cause and effect. Justice in itself is the cause of any other justice formally and causes thoughts of justice and, even more, words of "justice" as an intentional object of thought (V.6.6.26, cf. V.5.1.29-43 & 49-50, II.9.15.15-17, VI.6.6.5-37, VI.6.15.16-18, VI.6.14.27-29).

406. This is a moderate echo of Heraclitus DK 22B136: "Souls slain in war are purer than those that perish in diseases."

407. Cf. Epictetus *Discourses* I.28.14 saying that war, sedition, the death of many men and destruction of cities should not be considered too great a disaster.

There must be just ways of appropriation. Greed is a quite common conation and will make people demand gold and estate (VI.6.10.4-5). How, then, can we account for the differences in distribution of learning and wealth? One must realise that learning – as education in, e.g., the classic Roman subjects of letters and rhetoric (II.3.2.11, II.5.2.23-24, cf. *VP* 3.3, 7.47, 14.19-20) – and wealth do not usually come by chance, for instance, by a sudden discovery of a hidden treasure (cf. *Laws* 913a-914b, Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1025a14-19),[408] or by a sudden gift from strangers (cf. *Meno* 90a, Aristotle *Physics* 199b20-22 and Diogenes Laertius III.20 on the release of Plato from captivity). Instead, they depend upon personal effort (III.1.1.30-32, cf. Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1099b13-25), and (III.2.4.45-47, cf. III.2.5.1-4):

> People must not demand to be well off who have not done what deserves well-being.

As a rule, personal effort is not only work of some exterior kind but also of an interior kind that comprehends the aims of the work done outwardly. Ingenuity is quite peculiar to each particular person (cf. II.3.14.21-23, III.4.6.56-60),[409] so, when the moon shines, there will be one who steals, while another does not (III.1.2.4-7, cf. *Laws* 854a)! Under the same environmental circumstances, and even doing exactly the same external *or* internal work (*ergon*, cf. III.1.9.12), some will become richer than others. Plotinus does not adhere to any labour theory of material value. Also, he says that the absolute value of any spiritual work done will depend on who does the labour, i.e. it will depend on one's personal history, for instance, on the hindrances one has previously created for oneself in one's ascent towards higher levels of relative freedom.[410]

Possibly something material determines the starting point for any effort (IV.3.15.7-9) but it is never anything material in itself like the moon, the stars, or corporeal fluids that make anyone rich, as they cannot make anyone king or general, provide him with the right parents or brothers for that purpose, or give him a wife (II.3.1.1-12, II.3.2.14-16, II.3.6.8-9, IV.4.31.42-45). At first glance wealth, like beauty, might seem wrongfully distributed to the bad and

408. The father of the sophist Herodes of Atticus had just this kind of luck, finding a treasure on his estate, cf. Philostratus *Lives of the Sophists* 547-548.
409. This is a general rule, so de Ste. Croix (1981) 123-24 is not right to say that Plotinus does not consider any other acquisition of property apart from inheritance, farming and finding a treasure.
410. Cf. chapters 'I.C. Unification with the One' and 'II.C. Determinism disrupted' above.

poverty, like ugliness, to the good. "How can this be the right distribution?" Plotinus asks rhetorically (III.2.6.5-11, cf. III.2.7.29-33).

Right acquisition of wealth is always due to something good of a kind, while wrongful acquisition is due to something evil. In the same way as wrongful usurping of power and office (cf. III.2.8.13-16 & 48-52), however, the evil man's wrongful acquisition of riches, when there is no evident theft, often has a concurrent cause or reason (*sûnaitia*) in a lack of virtue in the ones who made him rich. Even habitually evil men could give someone a present without sinister, ulterior motives; still, it was something virtuous and good in them that made them do it in that case (II.3.14.9-15). Moreover, if anyone spends his deserved wealth on something that really does not deserve reward, it will not be without advantage for those among the poor who know how to make use of it (III.2.5.6-18, cf. III.2.13.7). In this way, nothing seems to run completely to waste; everything seems to be of some use in the causal chain of the world.

Sexual intercourse and marriage (*gamoi*) are usually established by adolescents and adults by preference in accord with Providence (i.e. *proairesis*) or, at the same time or solely, on the impulse of nature. These circumstances are also the cause of the children that result from them (II.3.14.27-29).[411] From birth, one can possess something good, inherited through blood alone: predisposition for courage, for instance (IV.3.13.19-20), cf. *Statesman* (310c-e), *Timaeus* (87a-b), Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* (1144b4-9). Errors in the transference of biological goods are bound to happen occasionally and might cause handicaps, but they are exceptions that are likely due to simple material shortcomings (cf. *Timaeus* 87a-b, Aristotle *Physics* 200a7, *On the Generation of Animals* 769b3-773a32). Like biological properties, parents might transfer other riches to their children (II.3.14.1-4), a good upbringing, for instance (IV.3.15.9). In the same way as the armourer Cephalus is considered a just heir in the *Republic* (328b-331d), inheritance is basically judged to be quite in order by Plotinus, if that which constitutes the heredity or the heritage is something good.

Apart from these ways of acquiring wealth by blood or by bodily work, there are only the spiritual ways left, and if riches are acquired by way of spirit,

411. Cf. subsection 'III.B.9.a. Gender, sex and love' below. Though he does not mention this passage as more than a reference number, my interpretation of the word *proairesis* here is in accordance with Phillips (1995), i.e. not meaning just any arbitrary "free choice" but rather choice in accordance with Providence, i.e. choice regarding the Good. Cf. chapter 'II.B. Distinguishable souls' above.

it can only be done by a virtue of some sort, in which case the wealth is fully deserved, for virtue is not attained by coincidence (IV.7.8.37-41).

The basis of one's merit, however, is often the result of the merits of others, which work together as one significant concurrent cause [cf. bones as necessary causes though not a sufficient cause or reason (*aitia*) for Socrates in jail in the *Phaedo* (99a), and the concept of *sûnaitia* in the *Timaeus* (46c-e, 76d), cf. *Statesman* (281d), *Philebus* (27a)]. For instance, the environment and the invention of agriculture are the precondition (*sûnergon*) for one's profit from agriculture. Using a modern example, profitable authorship today presupposes not only the invention of writing and printing, but also the existence of publishers, booksellers, marketing and readers. In the same way, only one person might be responsible for actually discovering a treasure (for instance the ring of Polycrates lost in the sea). The person who put it there is a concurrent cause, however. "The All" – those factors that allowed it to remain there and guided the finder – is the steady, indispensable concurrent or coinciding (*sûmpesein*) cause (II.3.14.17).[412] In modern terms, this observation might be interpreted as an argument for Georgism or social liberalism to balance Plotinus' otherwise quite libertarian views on appropriation.

Though, as we have seen, there are differences as to the connection with conscious human efforts, the metaphysical background for Plotinus' view of acquisition – as investigated in the previous parts above – is that everything is brought forth by a sufficient reason and could only be completely accidental in appearance.[413] Plotinus mentions the egalitarian Gnostics who naïvely think that everyone has already become exactly like and equal to the gods whenever their preachers tell them they are (II.9.9.52-60). If anyone is appalled like the Gnostics that there is no full equality of power or wealth and that there is poverty in this world, then they are not yet conscious that this is not decisive.[414] According to Plotinus, equality is not to be found "in these things (*en toutois*)" but, presumably, only before the henological Law and

412. If it in any way corresponds to the use of *sûmpesein* in Aristotle *Physics* (198b27), meaning "to coincide", Plotinus' usage here is unquestionably weak, but the meaning is quite clear, as the role of the All is surely not only to be considered an accidental *sûnergon* in the Stoic sense, but is much more probably a *sûnaition* in the Stoic sense as well as in the original Platonic sense of a *sûnaitia*, i.e. what amounts to an indispensable *sûnergon*. On the Stoic senses of cause, cf. Frede (1980) 240-41.

413. Cf. section 'I.B.6. *In-esse* and determinism' and chapter 'II.A. Sufficient reason behind causes'.

414. Cf. Alföldi (1930b) 252.

Order. Neither the abundantly wealthy nor the powerful have acquired any big advantage in relation to *idiôtôn*: ordinary private persons (II.9.9.1-5, cf. *Philebus* 48e). Wealth and poverty are exterior appearances, like incidental corporeal illnesses, (I.8.5.19-30, II.3.8.12-13), and any exteriority is basically always in the grip of poverty (IV.8.2.13-14). When one's exterior properties are stolen, the theft itself shows that the possession was not really the property of the so-called owner (I.4.7.1-14),[415] and moreover, the acquisition often turns out to be a nuisance for the thief. For the owner, the possession is in fact also fundamentally worse than the theft of it (III.2.15.39-43). Exterior property definitely does not equal the Good (VI.7.29.16-17).

Without in any way going as far as later authors like Rousseau and Proudhon in asserting that "property is theft" – i.e. "private property is theft from the community" – except in the case of black magic (IV.4.42.16-18, cf. *VP* 10.1-13), Plotinus nonetheless posits quite an extreme, provocative Cynic-Stoic view here. It is, however, meant to prepare the way for the Platonic standpoint that what really matters is insight (*Meno* 88c-89a, cf. *Lesser Hippias* 375d-e). Insight will show one the way. The one who is afraid – for loss of his bodily health or property – has not attained full virtue yet but is only half a human being (I.4.6.24-32, I.4.15.9-16, cf. *Phaedo* 82c). Accordingly, Plotinus tried – unsuccessfully – to divert his pupil Serapion from greed and usury (*VP* 7.46-49), as interest is banned in the *Republic* (555e-556b) and the *Laws* (742c).

There are therefore two basically different ways of life in this world, the life of the sage and the life of the masses (I.4.8). Plotinus' Neoplatonism renounces the righteous Platonic demand (cf. *Laws* 690b-c) of Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* (982a17-19) that:

> the wise man should give orders, not receive them; nor should he obey others, but the less wise should obey him.

Since he usually does not possess the virtues for public behaviour mentioned as necessary for a leader of public matters in the *Laws* (968a), the sage deliberately lets the most capable (*tois epieikesterois*) among the mass population have power and wealth. These are the ones among the majority of men who share a trace of virtue; i.e. they participate in civic virtue (V.9.1.10-16). The common crowd (*ho phaulos ochlos*) must care for the needs of the more competent

415. Cf. Epictetus *Discourses* III.24.1-5 that you should not consider anything in this life as your real property but only as loans from God.

and wise by doing manual work (II.9.9.6-11, cf. III.8.4.29-47), so that in this way, these people are necessary as well (III.2.11.13-16). This was a common view shared by Plato (*Republic* 416d-e, *Statesman* 288e-290a, *Laws* 806d-e, 920d-e) and Aristotle (*Politics* 1326b26-32, 1328b34-1329a2, 1329a17-26, cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1165a30-33). The characteristic Platonic tripartite view of the ranks of society (cf. *Republic* 564c-565a) also originates earlier on. According to Diogenes Laertius (VIII.8), Pythagoras replies to the tyrant Leon that life is like a festival, where some seek fame in games of sport, others pursue wealth by doing business, while the best are those who are only spectators: the philosophers who search for the truth, cf. *Symposium* (205d).

They do not gain wealth outwardly perhaps, but instead they acquire inner wealth. In this way, it is perfectly possible to become rich, though one is not active outwardly, and even richer than the ones who are active outwardly to the highest extent (I.5.10.10-12, cf. *Euthydemus* 281b-c, *Republic* 521a). Plotinus exploits the tale of Diotima in the *Symposium* (203b-204a) on Love (*Erôs*) of the Soul (*Psûche*) being the son of Ingenuity (*Poros*) and Want (*Penia*) searching for Wealth (*Ploutos*) in Wisdom (cf. *Republic* 490a-b and Plotinus' interpretation in III.5.8-9). When this happens by unification with Intellect or optimally the One, the soul will consequently have contempt for what it previously appreciated, such as position or power or riches or beauties or sciences, because interest in them will have vanished in favour of a greater happiness (VI.7.34.30-38).

Metaphorically, real philosophers, the wise, and sages in this world participate in the same wrestling match (III.2.8.31, IV.3.32.24-27),[416] *agôn* or process of selection as everybody else on the sports ground (II.9.9.14-15, III.2.5.1-4, cf. *Meno* 94b-c, *Phaedrus* 256b, *Philebus* 41b). There are winners and losers and those who get penalised by the referee with reference to improvements and preparation for the next life. The wise are the ones who distinguish themselves and, therefore, may not get further incarnations (III.2.15.24-29); these are the ones who cannot really be hurt by anybody else, even if they lose their deserved wealth or are murdered. Unification with the body is in itself an evil that is only moderated by virtue, which at the time of death, in the separation between soul and body, will allow the soul to leave for something better (I.7.3.14-19). In other words, it is important to separate

416. Cf. Diogenes Laertius III.4 on Plato in wrestling having acquired his (nick-)name *Platôn*, "the deep-chested". Plotinus knew of Diogenes Laertius, cf. *index fontium* in the 1983 *editio minor*. Miles (1999) 124 suggests that Plotinus' use of the metaphor is influenced by his experience of gladiators in a Roman circus like the Colosseum.

now. This is far beyond the Cynic or Stoic interpretation of Socrates' saying that "the better man cannot be harmed" in Plato's *Apology of Socrates* (41c-e), *Crito*, *Gorgias*, *Lesser Hippias*, *Republic* book I and *Seventh Letter* (335a).[417] In fact it is genuinely Platonic, since the soul, or one important part of the soul, is recognised as fully beyond the material world: as immortal and only in this world in unbroken migration and transmigration (e.g., III.2.4.23-45, cf. *Phaedo* 67d-e). There is an outer Socrates (cf. *Republic* 588d-e) who is an actor in the puppet show of this world (III.2.15.47-59) and, most probably, a corresponding inner, calm Socrates (II.5.2.17-18, cf. *Republic* 589a-b). In this way, following Plato's model (cf. *Symposium* 212a, *Theaetetus* 176a-e and *Philebus* 49a, 52b), Plotinus thinks the sage belongs consciously to another order than the order of this world, while others only do so unconsciously (II.9.8.43-46, IV.3.14.11-13, IV.3.15.10-15, I.4.7.14-17). So, contrary to the opinion of Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1153b14-21, *Politics* 1280b39-40), one's perfection does not depend on whether the society is a good one.

This Cynic Platonism is strongest when Plotinus says that too many corporeal advantages weigh the inner man down and reduce him to body only. For one's contemplation to win force, some tendency to reduce the importance of the body is needed (I.4.14.8-19), so that the true, thinking man appears instead (cf. *Phaedo* 65c-d). The sage exceeds the worldly people of the masses to such an extent that even if a person of that kind might be as beautiful and tall and rich as any ruler of mankind – one cannot help thinking of the emperor (also I.4.7.17-20) – one should not be envious (cf. *Apology* 40d-e). Though the sage knows perhaps just as much as the emperor on statesmanship, there is nothing wrong in the emperor ruling over much more in this world than the sage does (cf. IV.3.6.8-10).

The wise man – the one who has real spiritual power (V.9.11.20-21, III.1.8.14-15) – will reduce the influence of the material and the corporeal concretely. Although it is not wrong in every way (*hopôsoun*) to give body the ability to flourish (*tên tou eu dûnamin*) and to exist (IV.8[6].2.24-25), he will desist from caring for any of his bodily charms and will just maintain the body as it is, at least when he gets old (I.4[46].14.14-26,[418] cf. III.5[50].3.30-36, IV.4[28].21.1-6)! Moreover, he will abstain from command, office and any worldly kingship no matter how superior to Xerxes' this kingship would be (again I.4.14.14-19, I.4.16.20-29, I.6.7.34-39, VI.7.34.32-38, cf. *Apology* 31c-

417. Cf. Epictetus *Handbook* 16 and *Discourses* II.5.18-21.
418. Cf. subsection 'III.B.9.a. Gender, sex and love' below.

33a, *Gorgias* 473e, *Republic* 521b, *Seventh Letter* 325a-326a). The wise man would do this, since he will already have risen above the coincidence (*tûchê*) and necessity (*anangkê*) employed by the real king of this world, World Soul (III.1.4.9-11, III.1.10.7-11, III.2.2.31-36, cf. *Timaeus* 48a).

Plotinus himself abstained from office. Though he was an arbitrator, he was not an official, and he tried to make his pupils refrain from occupying official posts in Rome (*VP* 7). Also, at the time he wrote on these issues (in treatise I.4[46]), his former acquaintance, Emperor Gallienus – the emperor who ruled for the longest span in the whole of the third century (only fifteen years) – had been murdered for political reasons in 268 CE. Some few years earlier (II.1[40].4.22-25), Plotinus had referred to and perhaps warned against similar assumptions of power by violence in the past. While in an early treatise (IV.3[27].17.21-25) Plotinus was worried that the steersman would be so occupied with his ship in the storm that he would be dragged down with the wreck, he now (I.4[46].4.32-36, I.4.7.14-26) seems to comment on such a fall from power as not worthy of resentment,[419] though Gallienus' fall might also have rendered any of Plotinus' possible further dreams of a Platonopolis quite impossible (cf. I.4.7.19-20).[420]

There is also a Platonic background for the remark on the insignificance of a fall from power. Before Plato made the civic virtues clear in the *Republic*, he had already made Socrates speak in the *Phaedo* (82a-b, cf. *Republic* 619e-620d, *Timaeus* 76d-e, 86b-87b, 90e-92c) about the usually socially-inclined philistine citizens who are only virtuous by instinct and habit. They are transformed into civic animals like bees, wasps and ants through reincarnation. Plotinus confirms that virtues from habit belong to the lower joint entity of soul and body (I.1.10.11-14, VI.8.6.22-25, cf. *Republic* 518d-e). He softens Plato's sarcasm a bit (III.4.2.25-26) by making more precise his point that those who live in accordance with civic virtues in a higher measure – consciously, that is (V.9.1.10-16) – will be men again in their reincarnation. Instead, as Armstrong draws to our attention in a fine note to his translation, the sarcasm is transformed to an attack on the bad king who in Plotinus' view might become an

419. The fact that Gallienus was the soldier emperor ruling for the longest time in the third century CE contradicts the general verdict of ancient senatorial sources – and Gibbon (1776) – that he was incompetent as regards military deeds. If he really was, he would probably have been murdered long before 268 CE, cf. contrary evidence to his military competence in the *Augustan History*, *The two Gallieni* XV, Alföldi (1928) 2, de Blois (1976) 117-18 and note 349 above.

420. Cf. Rudberg (1922) 12, who suggests that Plotinus in I.4.7.17-22 could be commenting on his own past bitterness caused by the failing of the Platonopolis project.

eagle (cf. *Republic* 620b on Agamemnon), i.e. the imperial symbol. According to Ecphantus the Neopythagorean, the eagle was the only animal that dares stare into the sun (cf. John Stobaeus' *Anthology* IV.7.64). Furthermore, while the courtly metaphor in V.5.3 dealt with above shows that Plotinus considered the emperor to be king on behalf of the immaterial One, Emperor Gallienus at times actually promoted himself as emperor on behalf of the unvanquished sungod, *Sol invictus*.[421]

Plotinus shows his sarcasm towards such opulent superhuman self-promotion as, commenting on the *Laws* (709b-c), he (III.4.6.47-60) alludes to Plutarch's story of Caesar's fortune (*tûchê*) being unable to force the wind (XXXVIII.3-4), because, according to Plotinus, Fate (*heimarmenê*) would have it otherwise.[422] This story confirms that at the level of Soul, Fate is considered by Plotinus to be superior to Fortune, as is the universal to the particular.[423]

To imitate the omen of apotheosis at the pyre of Augustus (Suetonius *Augustus* 100), an eagle was usually set free during the imperial cremation,[424] a ceremony which Plotinus had the opportunity to observe in Rome several times during his life. Quite economically and to the point, Plotinus recommends to us not to worry about any expensive sepulchral monuments (I.4.7.29-31, cf. *Laws* 959c-d).

III.B.7. The city-state

As already said above,[425] the demand on the mortal king or statesman is to make the best possible laws, to avoid human lawlessness (*Laws* 873a, 874e-875a, cf. *VP* 22.29-30, Porphyry *Letter to Marcella* XXV). Plotinus conceives

421. Cf. Alföldi (1928) 51, Alföldi (1938) 161, 163, 165 with corresponding plates and de Blois (1989) 78.
422. Plotinus here metaphorically describes any soul set "just as in a ship, in some seat of fortune (*hedran tûchês*)" ascribed by the "Spindle of Necessity (*Anangkês*)" mentioned in the *Republic* (616c). According to Professor B. Rankov, Royal Holloway, in correspondence July 2001, it is not attested to by any Greco-Roman sources that any particular seat on board was called a "seat of fortune".
423. Cf. chapter 'I.A. Unification with Soul', section 'I.C.2. The One within' and chapter 'II.B. Distinguishable souls' above. The particular human soul that unifies with Soul, Intellect or the One is an exception with a good Fortune (*eutûchê*) that overcomes Fate.
424. Cf. Gradel (2002) 269-70, 291-98.
425. Cf. section 'III.B.1. The king'.

of this as being automatically obvious for Providence, the legislation of the Divine King. In contrast to the mortal legislator, he makes laws that are adequate and precise (cf. *Statesman* 294a-295a), the applications of which the hypostasis of Soul – Aristotle's criticism disregarded (I.1.4.25-26, cf. *On the Soul* 408b11-13) – fulfils as the weaver, loom and web of this world (cf. *Statesman* 279a-b, *Timaeus* 36e, 41d and *Cratylus* 387d-390b). So the web is actually a web of laws, reasons and causes (III.1.4.9-11, III.1.2.30-36), none of which are cognisable in a single instance, even by the wise. Still, the wise ought to know that there are laws behind every single instance, and not give up like Aristotle apparently must (*Metaphysics* 1036a2-9, 1065a6-11, 1086b32-33, *On the Soul* 417b22-28, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1139b18-24, 1140b31-33, *Posterior Analytics* 100a15-100b1), saying that there is no science of the particular. Plotinus writes (IV.4.39.11-17):

> The rational formative principle of the All is more like the formative thought that establishes the order and law of a state (*kosmon poleôs kai nomon*), which knows already what the citizens are going to do and why they are going to do it, and legislates with regard to all this, and weaves together by the laws all their experiences and arts and the honour or dishonour that their acts merit, so that all that happens in the state moves as if spontaneously into a harmonious order.

One should note that this world on the whole is compared to a city-state, a comparison made by Plotinus also in other places (e.g., IV.8.3.16-19, II.9.9.16-19). Perhaps this point of view is influenced to some degree by Stoicism[426] and by historical circumstances like the generalisation of Roman citizenship by Emperor Caracalla. Essentially, however, it dates back to Plato's *Cratylus*, *Republic*, *Statesman* and in particular the *Timaeus*, where the structure of the world in the introduction is implicitly compared to the structure of the best possible city-state (17c). Providence has arranged this city by weaving its elements together in the best possible way, so that virtue is rewarded and vice is punished in the short, as well as the long run.

Even if it seems odd to make complaints about a world where Justice and Inescapability rule at all levels – a universal city-state where the implicit social contract of Plato's *Crito* even without the power of dialectic is already attuned to the ideals of the *Republic* – one is still not forced to stay within this world

426. Cf., e.g., Schofield (1991).

and citizenship if one does not really like it, Plotinus writes (II.9.9.16-17). Here and in other places Plotinus seems to contradict Socrates in the *Phaedo* (62b-c) by leaving space for suicide like some of the Stoics: Chrysippus and Seneca for instance. Yet, it is altogether possible that Plotinus is sarcastically pointing out the fact that it is hard, not to say impossible, to leave this world. When one has not done that spiritually, one is bound to be reincarnated (IV.3.12.35-39, IV.3.13.24-32, IV.3.17.26-31, IV.3.24.8-21, IV.4.5.26-31, IV.4.44). Therefore, it is all about elevating oneself from this world spiritually, and, only to a lesser degree, physically. Physically, one has to place limits on oneself. Only if this simple demand is not possible because of a glaring material deficiency like the one we would possibly suffer if allotted the misfortune of being a prisoner of war (I.4.7.29-45, I.4.16.17-29, II.9.8.42-43), then suicide (*prokoptein*, a Stoic euphemistic expression meaning "to depart") is allowed (I.9, cf. I.4.16.17-29).[427] In the *Crito* (47d-e), it is said that life would not be worth living with a miserable and crippled body. It is then no great step to the distinct possibility of suicide appearing in the *Laws* (854c, 873c-d), even though it is said in the *Laws* (902b, 906a), as in the *Phaedo*, that humans are God's possessions. Plotinus therefore does not contradict Plato more than the Athenian of the probably late Plato contradicts the Socrates of the "early" Plato in the *Phaedo*. In fact, there might be no contradiction. The similar circumstances forcing Socrates to drink hemlock and the prisoner of war to commit suicide are the degree of constraint put on the particular person by God. According to Plotinus, that constraint had not been placed on Porphyry in his passing state of depressive rashness that was tempting him to force God (*VP* 11.11-19, cf. *Republic* 573c).

For this world is like a well-organised city ordered by God, a city endowed with good laws, and one should not criticise the whole, just because some parts are less worthy (III.2.11.12-16, II.9.7.4-7). Plotinus carries the argument of Socrates in the *Crito* (48c, 51b) to its logical conclusion when he says that public executioners or persecutors, though scoundrels at times

427. Cf. Rist (1969) 254: "There is […] no single Stoic theory of suicide though we can recognize a number of largely unformulated assumptions common to many of the Stoics." E.g., Seneca *Moral Letters* XXIV.25: "A brave and wise man must not flee from this life, but quit it." Seneca in the same letter 6-8 presents the story of Cato lying awake his last night before killing himself, reading Plato with a sword by his side, the former symbolising the will to die, the latter symbolising the power to die. In this connection Graeser points to *SVF* III.768, p. 191, 8-9 saying that the wise man who experiences incipient insanity is permitted to commit suicide, while on the other hand, according to both *SVF* I.216 and Plotinus I.9.11-12, the wise will probably not grow insane.

– like Anytus and Meletus, indeed – are also necessary for the perfection of the city (III.2.17.85-89). As a rule, there are good laws in the particular cities and states all over the world. It trains one's understanding further if one not only studies the souls of particular persons but also finds different customs and laws beautiful (I.3.2.9, I.6.1.4-6, I.6.4.7-12, I.6.5.2-3, I.6.6.27-29, I.6.9.2-5, II.9.17.23-25, V.8.1.22-26, V.8.2.36-43, V.9.2.6-7, cf. *Phaedrus* 248d, *Symposium* 210c, 211c, *Greater Hippias* 298b, *Gorgias* 474e, *Statesman* 295a, 301a). Expressed in a slightly Pythagorean manner, laws might exhibit more or less adjusted measures (I.6.1.40-44, cf. *Statesman* 284b-285c, *Philebus* 17d-e).

Circumstances of different countries and cities are very different, as are the circumstances of different bodies (IV.3.7.20-25). And, as mentioned before, now and then a divergence appears between the laws of nature in different times and spaces and the conventions and laws instituted by human considerations at the same time and place. Historically, man's spiritual freedom has taken on different shapes, as it has different bodies, and the soul readily gives the body more than its due, because according to the law of nature, the soul is close to the body (VI.4.16.13-21, cf. IV.8.4.21-26).

Plotinus has embarked upon his version of the political digression from the *Theaetetus* (169d-179c), which sets Protagoras' *homo mensura* principle in connection with the doctrine of constant flux ascribed to Heraclitus. This becomes quite sarcastic in political respects, since if there is no necessary development like the one suggested in the *Republic* (562a-580a) then, at least, there is an impending danger – as the *Statesman* (299e-301c) establishes – of a process from the Protagorean and democratic, but naïve humanism implying that everybody would have the same insight in legislation (Protagoras in the *Protagoras* (323b-c) slightly dissociates himself from this view) to the strong man at hand mentioned in Heraclitus (DK 22B33, cf. 49):

> It is law (*nomos*), too, to obey the counsel of one (*henos*).

Then, in the *Theaetetus*, a line is drawn from Protagoras in the dialogue *Protagoras* to the Heraclitean advocates for irrational violence, Callicles in the *Gorgias* and Thrasymachus in the *Republic*. Only in the *Laws* (714a, 957c) could Plato gain from the Heraclitean statement by restricting the designation *nomos* for what is truly in accordance with Intellect (*nous*). A new depth for interpreters like Plotinus will then appear in Heraclitus, making it intelligent to obey the counsel of the One.

Plato acknowledges with the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist* a distinction between perception and thought in epistemological respects. The latter is the

entry to truth, but that does not necessarily dismiss the former. He analogously indicates a distinction between national customs (cf. *Statesman* 295a, 301a: *patria ethê*) and other laws grounded in nature on the one hand and certain more or less universal laws on the other.[428] Certainly, there is a place in Platonism for what von Savigny later was to call "the feeling of inward necessity" in unwritten and customary, written law (cf. *Crito* 50c-51c, *Statesman* 295a, 300a-301a, *Laws* 681b-c, 793a-d), according to geography and climate as Montesquieu would have it (III.1.5.11-14 & 24-26, cf. IV.3.7.20-25, III.5.4.1-13, III.5.5.15-17). From the *Timaeus* (48a) we know that the necessity of Intellect is meant to govern the necessity of Nature, but how far this is resolved surely depends on historical processes. Plato's *Euthyphro* with its still (15c-e) unresolved question of whether the killing of a murderous serf – who murdered a slave in anger – should really be considered murder (4b-e), however, shows the historical dilemma between obedience to laws of kinship and natural dominion on the one hand and the obedience to universal laws forbidding all murder, even the murder of murderers, on the other hand (cf. *Crito* 48c, 49c-d). Persons with the necessary participation in Intellect will find and enact this latter kind of law by degrees in due time, cf. *Laws* (872c). It is a search for which the final aim is likeness to God (*Theaetetus* 171e-172d, 176b).

In the same manner Plotinus writes – probably encompassing at the same time the quotation from the *Odyssey* (XVII.485-87) in the *Republic* (381d) that:

> The gods, in the likeness of strangers from foreign lands,
> Adopt every sort of shape and visit our cities

– that the cities in reality turn themselves to the same and only God (VI.5.12.31-36). Any soul's reasoning discursively and meaningfully concerning what is just, presupposes something just in itself as necessarily existing according to Plotinus (V.1.11.4-6). At any rate, he goes further than that by transferring the rest of the digression in the *Theaetetus* to apparently Roman circumstances and adds new imaginative elements from there. So, those who govern must find out how things really are. Wisdom will grow in a counselling setting of elderly wise men and find the way things should be done (VI.4.15.23-36, VI.5.10.18-23). The assembly of this dialogue is surely meant to be like the

428. Cf. the distinction made by Helm (1995) 236, 242, who implies, however, that only universal laws could really be recognised within Platonism.

divine, Nocturnal Council sketched out by Plato. The description in the *Laws* (962d) fits well into Plotinus' interpretation:

> As the drift of our present argument shows, that council must possess virtue in all its completeness, which means above all that it will not take erratic aim at many targets but keep its eye on one (*eis hen*) and shoot all its arrows at that.

In both republican and imperial Rome, this assembly corresponds to the senate. However, the wailing cry of the hungry crowd from outside might – as it is said in Plato's *Timaeus* (70a) and again in Virgil's *Aeneid* I.148-53[429] – drown out this vital discussion or even the speech of a sensible man in the setting. By its clamour, the worse part of the assembly itself can also easily effect this. Then, the worst vices will rule the city (VI.4.15.32, IV.4.17.18-30). The crowd does not regard any truth beyond its own feelings, and everybody also knows that children will weep and wail for nothing (III.2.15.44-63, II.9.9.11-14, I.4.15.16-21, cf. *Apology* 34c, 38d-e).

Just as Plato makes comparisons between the psychology of personalities and social psychology in the *Republic*, the *Theaetetus*, the *Statesman* and the *Laws*, Plotinus relates this observation to the condition of the particular person. It is also important here to subject the multitude of desires to the wisdom of Intellect, letting wisdom become one's true self (cf. V.8.5.15-19), while letting the self-evolving desires of the body live only by the grace of wisdom. As already mentioned, the soul readily gives the body too much attention, not according to the laws of Intellect directly, but instead to the laws of Nature (VI.4.16.21). So Plotinus stresses the link back again to social or political psychology when he (IV.4.43.20-21) refers to the *Iliad* (II.547) as used in the *First Alcibiades* (132a):

> The civic body belonging to greathearted Erechteus looks attractive.

It is implied that one ought to see that body of the progenitor of the Athenians naked as well. In other words one should not fall headlong in love with the

429. It is plausible that Virgil, just as Cicero, might have been under Platonic influence, perhaps even through Cicero. In the *Laches* (191a-b), Aeneas is mentioned as a "deviser of flight", cf. *Iliad* VIII.108, i.e. in Neoplatonic terms as a "deviser of flight from this world", cf. note 391 above. Likewise, in the Italian Renaissance, Christoforo Landino easily made a Neoplatonic interpretation of the first six books of the *Aeneid*, cf. Hankins (1990) 309.

people, *dêmos*, and its whims, as Plato also warns us in his *Euthydemus* and *Gorgias* (481d-482a, 513c), for instance.

It is interesting that Plotinus comments on Intellect as certainly not being Aristotle's practical intellect (V.3.6.35-43), since Intellect according to Plotinus does not have any need for what does not belong to itself and therefore is not practical. At first glance, this passage seems to support the claim that Plotinus could not have espoused a political philosophy: political philosophy being a main field for practical intellect. On the other hand, the passage only considers Intellect in itself and does not deny that there are connections between Intellect and practical intellect. In fact that would be a difficult claim to maintain since man participates in theory and practice alike and could not do with Intellect in itself, but must develop a practical intellect and a practical wisdom as well (I.3.6.8-17, cf. I.2.7.6-30, V.9.2.18-22, V.9.11.13-16 & 21-24), a political science and a political philosophy included:[430]

> The other virtues apply reasoning to particular experiences and actions, but practical wisdom is a kind of superior reasoning concerned more with the universal; it considers questions of mutual implication, and whether to refrain from action, now or later, or whether an entirely different course would be better. Dialectic and theoretical wisdom provide everything for practical wisdom to use, in a universal and immaterial form. […] And can one be a wise man and a dialectician without these lower virtues? It would not happen; they must either precede or grow along with wisdom.

Practice or action (*praxis*) is a consequence of theory or contemplation (*theôria*), just as a major effect of Intellect contemplating the One will be the outward practices of World Soul (IV.8.7.30-32).[431] Plotinus distinguishes between compulsory action and voluntary action, and even though voluntary action is less dependent upon the external sensible world, still, it is aimed outward (III.8.1.14-18). This is analogous to the circumstance that Intellect in the metaphysical sense also becomes practical, according to Plotinus, when it combines with Soul according to the principle of Providence (III.2.1.21-22, III.2.16.10-17). In fact, Plotinus says that the innate predispositions for temperance and justice can be perfected to the proactive state by reason (*ek logou*) and training (II.9.15.15-17), considering that practical as well as theoretical actualisations are valuable (*kalas*, I.4.10.22).

430. Cf. section 'II.C.7. Puppets, slaves or assistants?' above.
431. Cf. further in Arnou (1921b).

The clear statement in Plotinus' last treatise but one that a contemplative person should withdraw from action (I.1[53].12.35-39) appears as a bitter exception to the general picture, drawing near the end of his life. For in the same way, we should interpret the passages from the middle period IV.4[28].43.18-24 and IV.4.44, which have been the cornerstone of the usual one-sided interpretation of Plotinus as being completely apolitical, opening up for "inner freedom" only, considering political power to be an enchantment.[432] Certainly, these two chapters are radical; ascribing the political urge to either fear for the bodily survival of oneself and one's dear ones or to bodily greed for more than survival: lower feelings, both unworthy of the true sage. The true sage should hold on to what can only be ascribed to his definite personal possession, while politics leads to endless fears and desires. The discussion is wrapped in Stoic notions, but is clearly rooted in the distinctions from Plato's *Philebus*. An interpretation relying on parts of the chapters only, however, will be unduly one-sided, as in their completeness they only consider the wise, and Plotinus admits that there are obviously other people than the wise in this world, and he usually considers bodily survival a legitimate concern for most people (IV.4.28.22-25, IV.4.44.14-16 & 21-24, III.5.1.55-59, III.2.8.45-46, cf. Xenophon *The Education of Cyrus* I.6.6). The world of sense remains, with or without the few sages, and there is therefore no reason to believe that according to Plotinus, politics as such should be abandoned worldwide. Government is necessary, but, imitating the deepest causal principle of the Plotinian hypostases, government should in every respect of life always be led without being contaminated by what is governed (IV.4.44.18-21, IV.8.2.25-30, IV.8.7, cf. IV.4.42.19-20, IV.4.43.16-18). As Plotinus says (IV.8.7.29-32):

> Both are certainly possible; it can receive from There and at the same time distribute here, since it was impracticable for it as soul not to be in contact with this world.

Put into context with the Plotinian corpus, IV.4.43.18-24 and IV.4.44 simply spell out how hard and risky it is to adjust to the right mean between legitimate and illegitimate concerns in this world. So, to become truly independent, it is better also to have ascent to a higher world, as the sage already has.

432. Westra (1990) 169, 176-80 constitutes the best-argued example of this interpretation with her verdict p. 169: "We have come a long way since Plato's *Republic* with its philosopher-king!"

Ascending there, Plotinus' statement that justice is paramount to reason and Intellect taking the lead (I.2.3.17-18) is not to be understood only in a narrow psychological sense but certainly also with all its social effects. It is characteristic of Plotinus that the people or the city – in Plato, Athens, for instance – symbolises at times not only the human world, but the entire sensible world (cf. *Timaeus* 19b-c, 24b-c, 26c-27b). One ought not to fall in love with the sensible world in itself, as that would lead to materialism and hedonism. And as Plotinus implies (II.9.15.4-22), the standpoint of Epicurus leads to contempt for all laws of this world, because laws are all ideal. Expressed in the rather harsh Platonic fashion, the denial of the spiritual and the ideal in the city leads to the purely bestial (III.2.8.9-11, III.1.7.17-18, III.1.8.15-17, cf. *Timaeus* 87a-b, *Laws* 766a, 874e-875a or *First Alcibiades* 134c-135b for instance). This outcome must be avoided, if humanity is to survive as humanity. Plotinus appeals to the old Heraclitean observation (DK 22B82, 79) repeated by Plato again and again (*Greater Hippias* 289b for instance) of man as being in the middle between gods and beasts, some more similar to the gods and some more similar to the beasts (III.2.8.9-11).

In the city this will correspond to a segregation into two segments: a higher, aristocratic-minded segment – manifest in Rome in the patricians, the optimats or *honestiores* – and a lower democratic or rather ochlocratic-minded segment (cf. *Republic* 550c-563e, *Statesman* 291d-292a, *Laws* 735e-736a) – manifest in Rome in *plebes*, *populares*, *proletarii* or *humiliores* (IV.4.17.23-35). The partition of the city is, however, much sharper in a metaphysical sense, since the wise, being wise, belong to an intellectual order in contrast to all others, i.e. in contrast also to most aristocrats and kings, *honestiores* and emperors. The Stoic views on the city of the wise have been traced back to their Platonic origins, the city-state in heaven in the *Republic* (592b, cf. 590e-591a, 500e).[433]

433. This is one of the sources of the motive of the two cities in Augustine *On the City of God*, as shown by Parma (1968). Cf. also *VP* 22.45-52 and 23.30 on Apollo's oracle saying that Plotinus after death came to "the company of heaven where friendship rules (*eis tên daimonian homêgûrin, politeuesthai d'ekei philotêta*)". Van Oort (1991) for his part thinks, however, that Platonism only teaches the worldly city as a reflection of the heavenly, while Augustine actually teaches an opposition. So, according to van Oort, the main inspiration is purely Biblical, being the contradiction between the sinful Babylon and the heavenly Jerusalem (*Psalms* 4.26). Van Oort is right by ordinary churchly reckoning but seems to forget that the Old Testament's opposition in the main is between the two earthly cities of Babylon and Jerusalem. Augustine's emphasis on the heavenly Jerusalem in its opposition to everything earthly could also be inspired by his youthful Manichaeism, cf. Adam (1952).

Yet, as Plato says there, one can perfectly establish its order in oneself now, an assertion with which Plotinus fully agrees.

Even though the wise man cannot help affecting the world, he is fundamentally a stranger in it, because one's self belongs to a higher order, the order of Intellect and ultimately, the One. So a census of a city-state in ranks according to property or crafts might not count resident strangers (VI.3.1.26-28).

III.B.8. Homeland and empire

If one interprets this statement as also a reflection of political philosophy, and by a similar, after all, moderate interpretation of Plotinus' already mentioned quotes from Homer and Plato on how to "fly to one's homeland (*patris*)", this will fit well with the considerations already touched upon. There are natural differences between the particular city-states, where some belong and others will be foreigners, even though the latter residents are easily adopted into the city-community over time, according to the same political digression in the *Theaetetus* (175a, cf. *Statesman* 262c-d, correcting the *Menexenus* 245d and *Republic* 562e-563a).

Given, however, that there are some values common for all the city-states, as is really the supposition of both Plato and Plotinus, one might ask why one city-state among them should not feel entitled to collect the other cities' will to defend these values into one will in a *sûmmachia*, a defensive organisation – as in the time of Plato the one led by Athens, and in the time of Plotinus, the one led by Rome? There is not much reason to object to this, so long as there really is agreement about the nature of these values and so long as it really is for defensive and liberating reasons (cf. *Timaeus* 25b-c, *Critias* 112d-e). Indeed, Plato fought for a similar Panhellenic defence league in the *Republic* (470b-471b, cf. *Menexenus* 245d-e) and in living reality in Sicily according to the *Seventh Letter* (332e, 336a, cf. *Third Letter* 319a-d, *Eighth Letter* 353a-e). In addition to the fact that Panhellenism was an immemorial ideal for any Hellenic or Hellenistic ruler as presented in also, e.g., Xenophon's *Agesilaus* 7.4 & 7.7, Panhellenism was an expected ideal for a Roman emperor in the third century CE as well, as appears from Pseudo-Aristides' *To the King* 20 & 34-35. This declamation might have been written to either Emperor Philip or, rather, Emperor Gallienus, who was remarkably more philhellenic than his predecessors. Gallienus was initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries at his

accession as a sole emperor in 260 CE (perhaps alluded to in *To the King* 37), and he was the only emperor apart from Hadrian ever to hold the office of archon in Athens.[434] Rome considered herself heiress of the Hellenic legacy, and Plotinus supports the view a long way.

He clearly sees a home (*oikia*), a ship, a city-state, a holy feast, an army and, so it seems, even a crowd (*ochlos*) as all positive instances of unity (V.5.4.35-38, VI.6.2.13-14, VI.6.12.19-20, II.8.1.34). The city with its feasts and its common crowd of ordinary people is obviously considered a home on a larger scale, while again, the army is considered a reflection of the city (cf. *Republic* 525a-c), just as the singular ship (*naus*) will be the contribution of one great household for warfare according to the best Homeric traditions (cf. *Iliad* II). Even though in the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition, and even more so in the Platonic than in the Aristotelian (cf. Aristotle's qualifications in the *Politics* 1261a15-24), they are all – including the ship (cf. *Phaedo* 58a-b, Plutarch *Theseus* XXIII.1) – standard examples of unity, his choice of examples could suggest Plotinus' experiences with the Roman empire and armed forces. For instance, if he were a convinced pacifist, he might have simply omitted mentioning the army and even more so the ship – in Rome, the galley – as examples of unity. Contrary to what is occasionally the case in the Aristotelian and the Stoic traditions, in Plotinus these examples are not used to show the notion of unity to be flawed by any devastating vagueness in order to prove it inconsistent. According to Plotinus, any more or less incomplete unities must be derived from pure Unity itself, the One. All governing principles in the world must possess relatively higher degrees of unity analogously.

In the great, old Panhellenic tradition, the Trojan War was considered a Hellenic act of defence.[435] In a passage preceding Plotinus' speculations concerning different socio-political unities, he therefore takes a rather clear stand against any form of real imperialism (V.5.3.16-18), since the great king, the king of kings:

434. Cf. *Augustan History*, *The two Gallieni* XI.3-6, and also Alföldi (1928) 44-52 and Alföldi (1930b) 245-58. Körner (2002b) lists other indications for the referred dating of *To the King*, despite his emphasis that it is a prescriptive declamation exercise without too much value as a descriptive, historical source for studying the life of, e.g., Emperor Philip or Emperor Gallienus.

435. Cf. Ousager (1993).

> does not rule over different, alien people but has the most just, the natural sovereignty and the true kingdom; for He is king of Truth […].[436]

This cannot refer to divine kingship as distinct from earthly kingship only, since for divine kingship there could be no alien people at all. Instead it is analogous to the Platonic *First Alcibiades* (109a-c, 133e) where the statesman is bound to be aware of what belongs to his own state as well as to the states of others, cf. the guardians in the *Republic* (375b-376b) and reflected in Dio Chrystom's *On Peace and War* (XXII.3-5). Plotinus refers to similar basic awareness (III.6.1.21-23, III.6.3.1). At the same time, it reflects Plato's warning in the *Seventh Letter* (351b-c) with Pericles' Athens clearly in mind, that the man who is head of a great city with dominion over many smaller ones should not distribute unjustly the property of the others. Plotinus has considered this notion of property and distribution in a wider sense as involving the notion of political power. Plato in the *Timaeus* (24c-25d) for instance, similarly employed the story of the insolent power Atlantis from the Atlantic Ocean as a spectre for Athens. So, according to Plotinus, only a ridiculous fool would complain that it belongs to the nature of wild animals to attack and bite intruders, and likewise, only a ridiculous fool would be surprised, if in foreign countries savage men attacked them in distrust (III.2.9.31-40).[437]

Palmyra presents an interesting case of contemporary imperial policy. In 267 or 268 CE, Longinus, another pupil of Ammonius Saccas (cf. *VP* 20.36-38), and at one time the teacher of Porphyry in Athens, became the principal minister in the increasingly rebellious government composed of Odaenathus (about 250-67 CE), his infant son Vaballathus and, especially, his guardian widow Zenobia of Palmyra (267-72 CE). Longinus had urged her to seek independence from Rome, and for this reason, at their final defeat, he was executed. The execution took place in his mother's hometown, Emesa on the river Orontes (272 CE).[438] Already before Plotinus' demise, Plotinus' chief

436. Cf. Augustine *On the City of God* XIX.12 on the unjustifiable way of Rome establishing its peace for others, *pax [romana] sua*, as Armstrong remarks in a note to his 1984 translation. Plotinus seems to comment on the tradition for autonomy stemming from elder Greek authors like Thucydides, in whose work autonomy is the ideal for the relationship of states to one another, cf. Ostwald (1982), and in general Torresin (1993) and Ørsted (1993).
437. As distinct from Gollwitzer (1902) 30: "[…] die Wörter Staat und Vaterland fehlen in der eigentlichen Bedeutung fast ganz im Sprachschatz des Mannes, der eine Platonopolis gründen wollte."
438. *Augustan History*, *The Divine Aurelian* XXX.3, cf. Zosimus *New History* I.56.2-3.

pupil Amelius had left Rome for Apamea, also on the Orontes in Syria (*VP* 2.31-33), the native city of Posidonius and Numenius (cf. *VP* 3.38-45, 14.12, 17.1-18.3, 20.74-76, 21.1-9), less than two hundred kilometres from the city of Palmyra and subject to its reign as was all of Syria. Amelius was certainly in contact with Longinus (*VP* 19.27-32), possibly through Porphyry (cf. *VP* 19.1-6 & 34-37, 20.76-104). At this time he was probably contributing to the development of the school of Apamea that later in the century was led by Porphyry's pupil Iamblichus from Chalcis (in Coele Syria),[439] e.g., by presenting a hundred books comprising all his notes from Plotinus' lectures to an adopted son in the city (*VP* 3.46-4.6, cf. 19.21-24). The Arab physician Zethus and the physician Paulinus of Scythopolis (also known as Beth Shean on the West bank of the river Jordan) had already passed away at this time (*VP* 2.17-20, 7.5-7 & 16-17), but they probably left some useful family ties and connections to the region. An additional intermediary might have been senator Marcellus Orrontius, another of Plotinus' pupils, who, as his surname indicates, probably originated from another place nearby on the Orontes. Marcellus Orrontius is perhaps the Marcellus whom Longinus was addressing in the preface to his book entitled as a reply to the philosophies of both Plotinus and Amelius (*VP* 20.14-17).[440]

About the time right after the murder of Emperor Gallienus, Porphyry got into a depressed state of both mind and body and was about to commit suicide, perhaps even as a direct effect of the experience of that overthrow. Plotinus consequently recommended him to leave the city for a while, which Porphyry in fact did (*VP* 11.11-19, 6.1-3, cf. 4.1-13, 5.5-7).[441] Longinus exhorted him to

439. Cf. Balty (1988) 95. Three outstanding mosaics dating from close to 362-63 CE, when Emperor Julian the Apostate visited Antioch and surroundings preparing for another campaign against Persia, have been excavated from the foundations of the later cathedral in Apamea. They formed a part of the basis of this centrally situated school and bear subtle philosophical significance. In sequence, they show: 1. Maid servants (some of them traditionally deceptive) receiving Odysseus returning to his homeland; 2. Socrates amid six of the Seven Sages; and 3. the Judgment (*Krisis*) of the Nereids on Cassiopeia, influenced heavily by Persuasion (*Peithô*). Cf. Balty & Balty (1974), Balty (1977) 76-87 and Balty (1981) 115, 117.

440. Cf. Alföldi (1930b) 256 n. 153 and Brisson (1982) 96, 102.

441. Porphyry's remarkably loose dating of his departure for Sicily "about the (*peri to*) fifteenth year of the reign of Gallienus" in *VP* 6.1-3 means that either Gallienus had in fact not been killed yet, or, as I suggest, Porphyry deliberately conceals that the murder of Gallienus had been an occasion for him to leave. If the former option was true, there would be no need of a loose dating. His other datings from the surrounding years are not similarly imprecise.

meet in his homeland Phoenicia for recovery and an exchange of views and writings (*VP* 19.1-13),[442] although this meeting did not occur, whether this was because Porphyry chose to remain in Sicily or not (cf. *VP* 21.18-23). In Longinus' letter from about 269-70 CE, where he for a start uses the first personal pronouns in the plural (*VP* 19.8-11), he implies that Porphyry would have the opportunity to meet more people and even more philosophers gathered there, although the others would definitely be less brilliant philosophers than Porphyry himself. He also says that he discusses the philosophy of Plotinus with Porphyry when the latter is present as well as absent. His reference to the intensity of the discussion when Porphyry once stayed in the hometown of Tyre (*VP* 19.34-37) implies specification of Porphyry's personal presence with Longinus rather than any correspondence with Longinus in Athens, though correspondence used to be their main channel (*VP* 19.1-4). Probably, then, Porphyry already met his former teacher Longinus in Phoenicia in 267 or the first half of 268 CE. Porphyry emphasises that he personally did not follow the exhortation in the subsequent, quoted letter of Longinus to join him, but what Porphyry in fact says is only that, at that advanced stage, he did not (*VP* 21.18-23). He could have done so previously. If, after Gallienus' downfall, more Neoplatonist philosophers had been almost as deeply involved with the disastrous Palmyrene experiment as was Longinus,[443] Porphyry knew how to gloss over the involvement. This might also be a reason why he emphasised Plotinus' more or less successful advice to his friends not to join – ordinary – politics (*VP* 7.17-49). Paradoxically, Porphyry's strategy made it possible for Emperor Julian the Apostate in due course to employ Neoplatonism in his self-confident pagan restoration of the Roman empire (361-63 CE) and his preparations for a renewed campaign into Mesopotamia against Persia as a defence of the Eastern borders, the instability of which had been nourishing defunct Palmyrian independence.

More significantly for the understanding of the political philosophy of Plotinus, Porphyry stresses that Plotinus and Longinus did not agree on everything, even to the point that Plotinus did not consider Longinus a philosopher at all

442. As distinct from Stoneman (1992) 130, not exactly in the city of Palmyra.

443. This possibility is suggested by Wundt (1919) 45-47, Alföldi (1930b) 259-61 and Alföldi (1939) 178. In his beautiful book on Zenobia, Hvidberg-Hansen (2002) 111 unfortunately confuses Longinus with Porphyry and mistakes the latter's direct acquaintance with Plotinus (from 263 CE, not, as Hvidberg-Hansen says, 262 CE) for a direct acquaintance between Plotinus and Longinus. Although both were pupils of Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus and Longinus probably never met.

(*VP* 14.18-20, cf. 21.18-23).[444] It is quite certain that Platonopolis, the city Plotinus and his friends planned themselves, was not going to declare independence from the Roman empire, whose *imperator* nominally in Greek indeed corresponded to the ideal king (*basileus*) of Plato. For instance, if Platonopolis were to be populated by veterans, they would in a sense remain at his command (cf. I.4.7.19-20).[445] Probably following Plato's *Laws* with its recommendation of the mixed constitution of kingship, aristocracy and democracy (693d-e, 712d-e, 756e), Platonopolis was rather meant to become a "germ of reason (*logos spermatikos*)" for a renewal of the Roman empire from within.[446]

444. Cf. Menn (2001), who, on the other hand, emphasises the critical stance of Longinus towards the philosophy of Plotinus to the extent that Longinus should not have considered Plotinus a Platonist at all but instead a Pythagorean (cf. *VP* 20.71-73, 21.1-9). If Menn's sympathetic suggestions on Longinus' behalf were correct, however, several of Plotinus' general doctrines would have been developed independently by himself rather than, as Porphyry presents them (*VP* 3.24-35, 14.14-16 & 20-25), having been essentially taken over from Ammonius Saccas – or at least not from the Platonist Ammonius, who also taught Longinus (*VP* 20.36-39). On Plotinus' critical stance towards Pythagoreanism, cf. also section 'II.A.2. *Causa sui* or *ratio sui*?' above.

    Another option that I would consider more likely, then, is that Longinus exaggerates the possible heresy of Plotinus in the interest of what had become common sense of official Platonists in Athens (cf. *VP* 20.39-40), cf. Menn (2001) 121. Longinus was presumably still a professor in Athens (cf. *VP* 20.48) or had just left the city at the time when he wrote this preface to his critical book on the doctrines of Plotinus and Amelius, i.e. probably sometime before 269 CE, as both of them are referred to as still teaching in Rome (*VP* 20.32-33). Even in that preface, Longinus would not be consistent, as he implicitly reckons both of them among Platonists (*VP* 20.29-33). Moreover, in the letter Longinus sent to Porphyry from Palmyra (*VP* 19) with Amelius nearby, he has grown far more open-minded towards Plotinus and his followers, almost to a point of scientific submission, at least towards Porphyry (*VP* 19.10-11, cf. 17.10-12). Longinus seems to have been asking for their assistance in building the Palmyrian empire.

445. This as a compromise between the militaristic interpretation of Wundt (1919) 39-40 (who suggests that the Platonopolis was to become a seedbed of élite troops, not unlike later SS order castles) and the pacifist interpretation of Heinemann (1921b) 500, based on Rist's suggestion, cf. note 359 above. The contribution of Rudberg (1922) 10-13 to this small interwar discussion appears as a moderation of the extreme interpretations of both Wundt and Heinemann by only allowing Plotinus to give concrete, personal directions and exempting him from giving more timeless political precepts. While Alföldi (1930b) 250-51 with n. 118 similarly sorts out Wundt's interpretation as far too realpolitical, he considers the compromise of Rudberg false. According to the conservative interpretation of Alföldi, Plotinus simply distinguishes between the necessary political requirements of the masses and the extraordinary assignments of the outstanding singular person.

446. Cf. Rudberg (1927) 17-18, as distinct from Edwards (1994) 147. The view of Jerphagnon (1981) 225 that Plotinus was or could be considered anything coming close to a new usurper of power just by being allowed to found his Platonopolis amounts to exaggeration. As Jurado (1985) 100-01 implies, the suggestion to establish a Platonopolis presumes some goodwill expected from the philhellenic emperor, Gallienus.

III.B.9. Dialogue, democracy and human rights

In Plato's *Statesman* (291d-292a, 302d-303b) we read that where relatively lawless circumstances prevail, a democratic constitution is to be preferred. Law-abiding kingship is nevertheless to be preferred over both lawless and law-abiding democracy. Moreover, kings are neither necessarily nor evidently royal by birth. Superstitious belief in hereditary monarchy was held to be a probable reason for the fall of the mythic Atlantis (cf. *Critias* 114d, 120d-121c). It therefore seems plausible that Plato (cf. *Menexenus* 238c-d, *Republic* 502a, 546c-547a, *Statesman* 301c-e, Aristotle *Politics* 1285a14-16), and also Plotinus (cf. III.2.8.23, II.3.14.12-15 & 24-27), would prefer law-determined elections of kings, like the election of consuls in the Roman republic and in part the predecessor-designated emperors in the Roman principate. From the *Gorgias* (519b-c), we know accordingly that when the ruler is overturned in a democracy it is his own fault, since it is a clear sign of his not having "brought up" – i.e. ruled – his subjects well enough. This is even truer in a relatively unrestricted autocracy such as the Roman principate, and especially in the offices of pure warrior emperors.

Thus, after the fall of Emperor Gallienus we find Plotinus writing from the viewpoint of the *Apology* (38e-39b, especially) that Providence is some sort of answer to the final fateful remark of the *First Alcibiades* (135e), that one should not consider the loss of power or of one's life for the sake of the city as something essentially evil. To be offered as a sacrifice at the altars (like King Priam, cf. *Aeneid* II.506-53) is not the worst death (I.4.7.26-27), presumably because that circumstance at least would make some sense of it. Moreover, correcting the anxieties of Antigone, there is really no difference between being buried or not, as in any case the body will rot away and disappear (I.4.7.28-29), and bodily death is not what matters. Death is no disaster for the mortal (I.4.7.22-26, cf. III.2.4.1-6 & 16-17, III.2.15.33-39);[447] and if it seems so, disasters should not be surprising after all, for it is altogether the natural order of this world to sometimes bring luck, power and kingship, and sometimes bad luck, loss of power and death. Therefore, though common sense considers it a good thing to die before experiencing the deaths or sufferings of our dear ones (I.4.8.13-17, I.4.4.32-36, cf. *Republic* 387d-e, 603e), it is really not the biggest misfortune to know that one's family is taken as prisoners of war or even to witness the rape of one's daughter (cf. I.4.5.6-7,

447. Cf. Epictetus *Discourses* III.24.4 & 88 & 104-105 that one should not think that anything, even life here, is one's property, and that one should be prepared to die.

I.4.7.31-40 and III.2.6.15-16 on King Priam in the *Iliad* XXII.59-65, against Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1100a6-9, 1101a6-8, 1153b19-21).[448] One should know that misfortunes are inescapably connected with this world in itself (I.4.7.40-42, cf. I.4.11.12-14).[449] Pity risks becoming a sentimental weakness just as self-pity certainly is (I.4.8). So when the sage abstains from the rule of this flawed world to contemplate Beauty in itself (I.6.7.21-39, cf. *Symposium* 209e-212a), he will not be dependent upon other men, not even his friends or members of his family if they are involved in evil because of their stupidity (I.4.7.45-47). Personal suffering, even extreme violence, can be contained by internal force of will (I.4.8). Plotinus' source for these doctrines is Plato's *Phaedo* (77e, 89c-e), *Crito* (46c) and the *Seventh Letter* (325a, 335a), and also Plato's Cynic and Stoic interpreters,[450] but he seems to have transferred them to his immediate surroundings and to his political friends. Officially, Rome was a law-abiding republic or monarchy. In reality it had become a capricious military dictatorship.

However, the proposal of a mixed constitution as the realistic ideal also suggests that democracy is an opportunity (IV.4.17.28-30), albeit democracy within certain serious constraints. Plato indicates a potential for mature democracy and a corresponding, more or less public dialogue (cf. *Gorgias* 504d-e). In contrast to what he does in the *Republic* (500b-501e), Plato in the *Statesman* (275c-276d) presents ruler and ruled as fundamentally on the same level. The mortal ruler is not as in the *Republic* a shepherd for men, as such a shepherd would actually be the Divine King and lawgiver instead, while the mortal ruler himself belongs to the herd of men (cf. *Laws* 713d-e). Therefore, he is merely the caring guardian of his fellow human beings and he ought never to be brutal (*Statesman* 276e). Also, in the *Laws* (693d-e), Plato writes of kingship and democracy as both having traits that provide indispensable matrices for making the best constitution.

448. Cf. the Stoic view in *CAG* XXI.2 p. 325.15 on experiences like those of King Priam and Epictetus *Discourses* I.28.26, in which we find almost the same words as Plotinus used to argue that the capture of one's children and wife by the enemy should not be considered the biggest misfortune.
449. Cf. Epictetus *Discourses* III.24.104-105 saying that when the misfortunes of this world are expected, they are easier to bear, and also *Discourses* I.6.26 saying one should consider in what a fragile state one is in this world, where unpleasant and hard things occasionally do happen, cf. Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* III.14.
450. Cf. Epictetus *Discourses* II.1.5 and II.5.22-23 saying one should be confident regarding what happens to one, but cautious regarding what one does oneself, cf. also Epictetus *Handbook* 16.

In this Plotinus follows Plato. As we saw above,[451] according to Plotinus (VI.4.15.23-36, VI.5.10.11-29), dialogue is important to reach truth in the council of the elderly wise (*ekklesia dêmogerontôn*). He quotes Heraclitus (DK 22B113), saying that "thought is common" (VI.5.10.11-12), but it would be quite interesting to know to what degree Plotinus thinks that serious dialogue about truth can include the people in general. Plato, for his part, in the *Statesman* (300e, cf. 292e, 297b-c and the *Euthydemus* 307a mentioned above) has his Eleatic stranger declare:

> Granted then that an art of kingly rule exists, the wealthy group or the whole citizen body would never be able to acquire this scientific art of statesmanship.

The mass-psychology in the Apollonian oracle's memorial song to Plotinus (*VP* 22.27) reflects the way Platonism suspects the manifold and the human crowd to fall into evil ways very easily.

Similarly, Plotinus does not consider all discussions understandable for everybody (V.8.2.45). There is no doubt that he considers equality in respect to worthiness as an illusion, since worthiness is dependent upon the insight and proactivity of the particular person. People can never become equal in the ruled city-states, no matter how good the rule and the laws may be (III.2.11.12-13, cf. *Republic* 420c-d, *Laws* 757a-758a, Aristotle *Politics* 1280a11-13). A psychological law shows this, since we might accept company with inferior people for a while but we will remember those of higher worth far better (IV.3.31.18-20, cf. II.9.9.74-79).[452] For among souls – in contrast to, e.g., corporeal force or sophistic arguments – the stronger univocally rules the weaker (II.9.8.41-42). To do only manual work, for instance, usually occurs from the inability to engage in contemplation (*theôria*), i.e. a lack of the best parts of one's soul (III.8.4.29-47, III.8.1.10-14, III.8.2.9-15, III.8.6.1-4, III.8.7.23-26, cf. *Republic* 590c, *Theaetetus* 175d-176c, *Philebus* 55d). So, the One beyond contemplation is explicitly praised for having neither manual nor intellectual work to do (*ergon*, VI.7.37.28-29) as distinct from everything belonging to either Intellect or Soul (IV.8.3.21-25, cf. IV.4.44.1-4).

On the other hand, Plotinus, just like Plato in the *Protagoras* (322c-323c),

451. Cf. section 'III.B.7. The city-state'.

452. This might be a sarcastic commentary on the *Discourses* II.22.36 of Epictetus, who, even with a quotation from Plato, says that one should be friendly towards people of lesser worth than oneself.

seems to admit to Protagoras the justice of his view that everyone has some sort of insight and some sort of participation in justice. Even though – from a Platonic standpoint – only a few will have it to a higher degree. For instance, all people think that they injure those they injure rightly, because those who are injured deserve it (III.2.9.27-28, cf. *Gorgias* 476d-e). Especially for Plotinus, every human being has the potential for these insights within, because everyone has a particular Form of himself belonging to Intellect already, and everyone even has a sparkle of the One within, which potentially makes any human being a free, creative cause (III.2.10.15-19, III.1.8.8, III.3.4.6-9, III.3.5.33-36). This potential is sufficient to free any slave.[453] To obtain the Good, any arbitrary slavery must finally be overcome, for (VI.8.4.17-22):

> that is enslaved which is not master of its going to the Good, but, since something stronger than it stands over it, it is enslaved to that and led away from its own good. For it is for this reason that slavery is ill spoken of, not where one has no power to go to the bad, but where one has no power to go to one's good but is led away to the good of another.

Replying to the discussion in Plato's *Laws* (776d), Plotinus thinks that losing possession of a servant or a slave especially shows that other human beings strictly cannot be owned (I.4.7.11-12, cf. IV.8.2.47). His pupil Rogatianus drew a radical conclusion from this teaching, dismissing all his house servants (*VP* 7.34).

Clearly as a commentary on Aristotle's *Politics* (1278b32-37) Plotinus says that servants only belong to their masters in one part of themselves, while in another they do not (IV.4.34.3-7). They cannot be altogether slaves (IV.4.34.6-7). So, when servants work for a master, they indeed do something for him with their hands, but on the inside they work to obtain the same goal as he does, viz. the Good (IV.4.35.34-37). This might be another echo of Heraclitus, from the utterance referred to in Plotinus (IV.8.1.14-15) that (DK 22B84b):

> It is exhausting to suffer and obey the same [masters].

Plotinus is replying in quite a Heraclitean manner (cf. DK 22B33) that to obey the highest principle, i.e. the One (IV.4.17.3-4 & 32-34), will lead to less suffering and no exhaustion.

453. Cf. previous two parts, especially sections 'II.C.1. The causal nexus of ultimate unification' and 'II.C.7. Puppets, slaves or assistants?'

As opposed to Aristotle's conception of the overall incompatibility of the inequality of human worth (*axia*) and any equal – democratic – freedom (*eleutheria*) in the *Politics* (1317a40-b11), Plotinus' combination of equality as regards freedom and inequality as regards worth notably shows traces of Roman influence. He confines himself to understanding freedom in chiefly the second sense put forth by Aristotle, its negative sense, "the freedom not to be ruled by anybody else" (1317b11-15, cf. *Republic* 557e). Cicero and others in the days of the republic had advocated the notion of *dignitas* as compatible with *libertas*, understood as what has been called pure "negative freedom" in citizens' rights.[454] Negative freedom in Plotinus is confined even more to a spiritual, i.e. 'inner', freedom. As we have seen in the previous parts of this book, the hope and concept of freedom depend upon ascent towards the absolute freedom of the One. Similarly, the adjective *eleutheron* that Plotinus at times employs to qualify Its kind of being 'free' signifies a free man and the emancipated opposition to the status of being a slave,[455] while the other important adjective he employs (e.g., VI.8.15.23) for Its absolute freedom or power, *autexousion* – derived from *(autê) exousia* – usually bears strong associations with political power.

For Plotinus, any corresponding positive 'exterior' freedom for man – "the freedom to rule" (cf. *Republic* 557e) – depends on the level of ascent towards the One and the worth of any acquired insight. This will be an insight into common experiences that are actual or likely to occur (IV.8.7.15-17), because since all souls are derived from the same source, the Soul, they share a community of feelings (e.g., IV.3.8.1-4), and shared experiences and affections form the basis of any public spirit (IV.9.3.1-9). For an ideal community with only "healthy" citizens in friendly cooperation (IV.3.4.33-35), like the one of Platonopolis for instance, some minimum insight is required. In reality, however, there are, as mentioned, big differences between the actual insights of men. There is no obvious reason to embark on an extreme democracy – like the one of Athens – among people who are too different and for the most part too naïve with respect to their opinions, especially when this all too easily leads to shallow rhetoric and the tyranny of the majority and the mob, led by those who by deceit appear wise to the people (II.3.11.7-10). As he says (I.1.9.5-6, cf. V.5.1.56-65, *Timaeus* 87a-b):

> For opinion is a cheat and is the cause of much evil-doing.

454. Cf. Wirszubski (1950) 14 and also Berlin (1958).
455. Cf. Beierwaltes (1990) xxxvii.

Rhetoric and music should only be used for the purpose of leading souls to the better (IV.4.31.19-21) or for a truthful popular education as is suggested by Plato in the *Republic* (410a-412b) and the *Phaedrus* (260c-e). Therefore, in a mixed constitution, democracy's restricted role is the opportunity for the people to inform the leaders and vice versa. In fact it corresponds to the institution of the people's tribunate in the republican constitution of Rome. In the principate, however, this office had essentially been taken over and, in fact, monopolised by the emperor too.

At any rate, Plotinus points to a natural will to power, which impels us to political activity and the striving to obtain office (IV.4.44.9-12). It is quite common to wish to engage in politics (cf. *Republic* 521b, *Seventh Letter*), much as one might engage in constructing houses and ships, as it is common to intend to do scientific research (cf. *Philebus* 55e-58a), and even to speak and act (VI.3.26.9-13). This will is quite independent of any actual insight into anything. The misconceived notions of the Good that have arisen from this, could – as already mentioned – easily lead to disaster.[456] Unfolding of the *libido dominandi* was, however, what the general ancient conception of the free man and *libertas* was about, even for Cicero (*Philippics* VI.7.19).[457]

We have already touched upon Heraclitus' dynamic conception of the relationship between being a slave and being free. In Plato this is found again in the concrete discussion of slavery in the *Laws* (776b-778a), epistemologically far-reaching in the *Meno* (73d & *passim*), and in the *Parmenides* (133d-e), the *Theaetetus* (157a, 182b) and the *Sophist* (247d-e, 248c) elevated to henological and ontological levels concerning the dynamic relationship between the active and the passive, the agent and the patient, the dominant and the suppressed. In his logical treatises, Plotinus therefore makes use of master and slave as an example of the category of relation, probably and specifically in his view subsumed under the categories of activity and passivity (VI.1.6.9-10, cf. Aristotle *Categories* 6b28-30, 1b27). Plotinus refines the view henologically, ontologically, and, by implication again, politico-philosophically. As we saw in the previous part, we have to find out who or what is the slave of something other and who or what in contrast has self-determination and what is master (VI.8.7.26-28).[458]

456. Cf., especially, section 'III.B.1. The king' above.
457. Cf. Wirszubski (1950) 12-14.
458. Cf. sections 'II.C.3. Two concepts of necessity' and 'II.C.7. Puppets, slaves or assistants?' above.

For instance, Plotinus corrects Aristotle (*On the Generation of Animals* 716a13-23, 730a24-b32, 768a10-20, *Physics* 199b6) by recognising that the woman's role in procreation is more than just one of being matter: she has equal formative power of her own. This view in V.7[18].2.7-12 and III.6[26]19.19-25 corrects his earlier Aristotelian view in III.1[3].1.32-36, a treatise which is already inconsistent on this point (cf. III.1.5.26-28 & 42-43 & 53-55, III.1.6.4-5),[459] and it aligns with the view of Plato (cf. *Republic* 459d-e, *Statesman* 310b-d, *Laws* 772d-773e – while the *Timaeus* 50d is a superficial exception drawing on the traditional male chauvinist view).

Inspired perhaps by the defence of the equal intellectual opportunities of women in the *Gorgias* (470e), the *Republic* (454d-456e) and the highly-esteemed examples of Aspasia in the *Menexenus* (235e) and, even more, Diotima in the *Symposium* (201d-212b) as well as the report on women among Plato's pupils (Diogenes Laertius III.46), there was an equal opportunity for attendance of women in Neoplatonic circles. Some even became quite prominent later on, like Hypatia in Alexandria or Sosipatra in Pergamum.[460] Apart from the female orphans Plotinus brought up, his circle included a lady called Amphiclea together with the owner of Plotinus' house, Gemina and her daughter of the same name, and then finally Gallienus' empress, Salonina (*VP* 9.1-5, 12.1-2). Plotinus' liberal view of women, like Plato's, differed from traditional Greek conceptions, and was closer to traditional Roman values. Plotinus, however, also distinguished himself from the usual Roman attitudes and did not confuse liberalism with loose living.

The reason why he did not go to the baths (*VP* 2.5-7) was probably the cheap sexual advances and indecent exposure of prostitutes and their customers to which one could be subjected there (I.4.12.1-4),[461] cf. *Philebus* (65e-66a). His theoretical view on prostitutes is given in his distinction between the whore Aphrodite (cf. II.3.6.1-4, I.6.8.18-21) and the heavenly Aphrodite (VI.9.9.28-46, VI.7.14.19-23, I.1.10.14-15, cf. *Symposium* 180d-e, *Philebus* 12b, 26b, *Seventh Letter* 335b).

459. Coles (1995) 83 argues that according to Aristotle, even the female has some sort of formative power, which is effective, however, only when the formative power of the male fails during the movements of copulation.
460. More instances of Neoplatonic women are mentioned by Goulet-Cazé (1982) 238-40.
461. Cf. Rist (1967) 8, 15, Stumpp (1998) 214-29 and Miles (1999) 88-89.

Plotinus was probably opposed to the widespread almost generic sexual exploitation of slaves in Rome, perhaps not only on the grounds of his general views on slavery as on his general views on sex. For, compared to love of pure universal beauty, sexual intercourse for Plotinus is a failure (*hamartia*) in obtaining one's true goal, as sex always will be love of particular beauty (III.5.1.34-44, I.3.2). However, Plotinus also says, inspired by the *First Alcibiades* (104e-105a, 131e-132a), that (III.5.4.6-9):

> […] the particular soul longs for what corresponds to its own nature, and produces a love which accords with its value and is proportioned to its being.

The precondition of a relevant sexual relationship seems to be a warm, quite personal relationship (VI.7.26.21-24, II.9.16.43-48), presumably no matter from which social classes the parties might originate.

Living together with Gemina, who does not need to have been in completely honourable widowhood as her lodgeress Chione (*VP* 11.3-4), Plotinus was perhaps not completely sexually abstinent in the manner that the *Phaedo* (64d) almost prescribes a philosopher to be. Besides Plato's male acquaintances, Plato was reported to have had at least one mistress, Archeanassa (cf. Diogenes Laertius III.31), and Plotinus could easily have followed suit. Actually, in several passages (V.8.2.9-11, I.2.5.17-21, I.6.6.29-32, I.6.8.3-20, VI.8.3.14) Plotinus expresses considerable joy in the beauty of women in passing.

Regarding sexual practices, he mentions (VI.9.4.18-20) the "passionate experience like that of a lover resting in the beloved", though it is ambiguous whether it is meant as a physical or a psychic rest or both. According to Porphyry's story (*VP* 15.6-17) he was opposed to pederasty, as he was against male homosexuality in general (IV.4.31.53-57, cf. III.5.1.13-14 & 62-63, III.3.5.41-49, *Laws* 636c-d, 836c-837d, 841d). The only exceptions seem to be genuinely divine, homosexual bestowing as in the case of King Minos from Zeus (VI.9.7.23-26) and (VI.7.26.19-21) a single reference to the pederast tendencies touched upon in the *Lysis*, *Charmides*, *Phaedrus*, *Rival Lovers, First Alcibiades*, *Symposium* (211d-e) and the *Parmenides* (127b). Plotinus acknowledges that the aim of nature's call for sex is mainly biological procreation (II.3.14.27-29, cf. IV.3.13.12-17),[462] and, correspondingly, the love of women is the only bodily love he mentions without expressing disgust of unnatural behaviour in

462. Cf. section 'III.B.6. Power and wealth' above.

his commentary on the *Symposium* (III.5.1).[463] He even compares Intellect's relation to Matter with the ithyphallic Hermes' relation to the Great Mother (III.6.19.25-30). Above, we have already noticed Plotinus' use of some Platonic erotic metaphors concerning the particular soul's engagement with higher levels of reality, especially the One.[464] Similarly, he says that, concretely, lovers try to fit the expectations of the loved ones in order to obtain intercourse (VI.7.31.15), imitating absolute unification with the One (VI.7.34.13-16). Though this is metaphor taken from the *Lysis*, the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*, it is not completely chaste metaphor. Likewise, in the *Republic* (559c) Plato only says that sex without a purpose is unnecessary, whereas Plotinus recognises that lust is a necessary effect of the body (III.2.4.41-42). As in Plato's *Philebus* (45d-e), Plotinus just warns us against "excesses (*pleonexiai*)" of sensual pleasures (I.4.14.8-11, IV.4.44.12-13, cf. II.9.17.27-29). In tune with the message of the *Philebus*, Plotinus also remarks that sensual pleasures are never pure, as (V.5.12.34-35):

> Beauty brings wonder and shock and pleasure mingled with pain.

It sounds as if Plotinus is speaking from experience, and not just of intellectual beauty (cf. I.4.14.21-26).[465] Probably, he counts himself among the second group of lovers he mentions in III.5.1.59-62:

> But some lovers even worship earthly beauty, and it is enough for them, but others, those who have recollected the archetype, venerate that higher beauty too, and do not treat this earthly beauty, either, with disrespect, since they see in it the completion (*apotelesma*) and plaything (*paignion*) of that other.

In any case, he was hardly an aggressively proselytising ascetic, as many of his pupils had spouses or apparently married without objections from him (cf. II.3.2.14-16). Amphiclea married the son of a certain Iamblichus (possibly, but presumably not the famous pupil of Porphyry, who was born ca. 245 CE); Zethus, one of Plotinus' closest friends, married a daughter of another of Ammonius Saccas' pupils[466] and Porphyry, the main editor of Plotinus'

463. Cf. note 401 above.
464. Cf. subsection 'I.C.4.a. Preservation of particularity'.
465. Cf. section 'III.B.6. Power and wealth' above.
466. Cf. the Neapolitan "brother sarcophagus" in section 'III.C.2. Emperor Gallienus in the chair?' below.

writings and, by Porphyry's own account at least, his most important pupil, also married. If we believe Porphyry's *Letter to Marcella* (I-III), this marriage was not for sexual or generative purposes but essentially in order to guard the widow of a presumably philosophical friend. The widow Marcella is immediately said to be suited for true philosophy despite her having given birth to seven children. In fact, Porphyry considers these children his own if they embrace the couple's common true philosophy as well.

It seems that Plotinus' philosophy concerning sexuality was at once more subtle and less inconsequential than Porphyry's.[467] Remarkably, discarnate marriage was a peculiar belief of Porphyry, for which he seems to have sought the approval of Plotinus, almost by ascribing to him the belief of a "sacred matrimony" (*VP* 15.1-6) of philosophers, cf. *Letter to Marcella* (XVI). However, when Plotinus, speaking to Porphyry in the latter's rendering (*VP* 15.17), repeats King Agamemnon's words to the hero Teucrus in the *Iliad* (VIII.282) almost word for word, "So strike and be a light to men", the context of the speech also makes Agamemnon promise Teucrus and so, correspondingly, makes Plotinus promise Porphyry, "a woman with whom he can share the bed" (VIII.291). By way of such strong heterosexual allusions and demarcations, Plotinus and Porphyry defend Platonism against the quite common suspicions of adherence to "Greek" male homosexuality, a practice condemned in Rome. Regardless of Porphyry's further ascetic motives in referring to Plotinus' appreciative words of him, the erotic profundity of Plotinus' allusion survives and it is far from asexual.[468]

Following the distinction in the *Symposium* between love of earthly beauty and love of ideal beauty, Plotinus points out, however, that earthly life and concern for spouses and children easily involve distraction from self-possession (IV.4.44.5-9). Again, the words of Plotinus sound as if he is speaking of experience, albeit a marginal experience, as Gemina was not his official wife (for instance, she did not follow him to his deathbed in Campania) and the noble children were only his in custody. The remark reminds us that the

467. Cf. Armstrong (1972) 39.

468. Partly following Kiefer (1933) and his couple of references to Plotinus' positive views on love, Brown (1988) 178-80 exaggerates somewhat in this connection by saying that, according to Plotinus, one should abstain rather from politics than from love. In contrast, Harrington (1976) 333-53 acquits the reading of Plato as the source of Elmer More's prudery but casts instead – rather misleadingly – the blame on More's reading of Plotinus. Prudery would rather be gleaned from reading Porphyry. Cf. notes 142, 395 and 458 above.

main purpose of Plotinus' philosophy was neither to establish nor to abolish vigorous earthly practices like sex and marriage, but rather to relativise them according to what he saw as the over-all loving mission of particular souls. His main purpose was to show that there is a way of emancipation beyond the world of sense and World Soul.

Likewise, we must be careful not to draw too radical political conclusions from Plotinus' general philosophy of equal opportunities. Solely on the basis of his ascription of particular Forms to particular human beings, Plotinus was probably the one among the ancient philosophers who came *closest* to formulating a political philosophy of positive, human rights. If we agree with Rist on this,[469] at the same time we must not forget that for Plotinus – inspired by Heraclitus and Plato[470] – such rights would be considered far more realistic, or Cynical, one might say, in their close dialectical connection with the opportunities for maintenance and enforcement of these rights than is often the case in political philosophy today.[471] Plotinus did not ascribe any rights to human beings apart from the context of merit in societies. In the same way as there would be no right of survival in the event of a general famine, right and rights depend upon a sufficient power behind them (cf. III.3.3.14-20, II.9.9.70-74), either in a material, an institutional, a military or a spiritual sense, and they can hardly be asserted in pure abstraction without due consideration of the circumstances of a historical time and place.

III.B.10. Efforts of individuals

For Plotinus, the character of activity determines the level of freedom. Until attainment of the extreme liberating point in the One, the liberator (*eleutheropoion*, VI.8.12.19), the best activity of all consists of intellectual insight. As is apparent from a whole treatise, VI.8, the One is completely free, and everything and everyone else stand in relation to it as slaves – like everybody in relation to the Persian Great King (cf. VI.8.16.10, VI.8.19.3-6 & 12-19, VI.8.20.17-19,

469. Cf. Rist (1982) 113. To be sure, neither did Plotinus explicitly formulate any philosophy of human rights in the sense of either Locke or the United Nations charter, as hardly anybody in antiquity ever did, as pointed out in the chapter 'Did the Greeks have the idea of human or animal rights?' by Sorabji (1993) 134-57.
470. Cf., e.g., Vlastos (1978) 173.
471. Cf. Rist (1982) 129.

VI.8.21.31-33, VI.8.7.26-28, VI.8.7.37, VI.8.10.35, VI.8.12.11-13). Within the soul of everyone, freedom always remains a leading principle (III.1.9.9-16), and virtue, including civic virtue, gives us freedom, liberating us from previous slavery (VI.8.5.32-34, I.2.6.24-27). Still, the particular soul only becomes truly free, when, by way of the proper virtues of Intellect in themselves without hindrance, it comes to the Good (VI.8.7.1-6, cf. V.9.13.7-11). Intellectual virtues are the foundations for all civic virtues (I.2.6, cf. *Republic* 430c, Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1177b27-31), and put together they are, as Plato suggests in the *Phaedo* (69b-d), all purifications to the point (I.6.6.1-3 & 10-11, I.2.3.5-10 & 20-21, VI.8.15.17-23, I.2.1.4 & 21-26, I.2.7.21-30, cf. *Theaetetus* 176a-b) where "virtue has no master", i.e. other than the One itself (II.3.9.16-19, cf. IV.4.39.2, VI.8.5.31 and VI.8.6.6-7, cf. *Republic* 617e).[472] In both a personal and a social context, Plotinus makes a highly profound interpretation of the *Laws*, where it is said (965b) that

> I believe we said that a consummate craftsman or guardian in any sphere will need the ability not merely to fix his regard on the many, but to advance to the recognition (*gnônai*) of the One (*pros de to hen*) and the organisation of all other detail in the light of that recognition?

Immediately before this it was said that virtue or goodness (*arêtê*) is "this One alone" (*hen touto monon*, 963d) and that all laws must have the One as their goal (*pros gar hen*, 963a) for everyone to obtain the right kind of freedom and mastery without effecting any self-enslavement or enslavement of or from others (962d-e).

From virtue and *beyond* virtue, i.e. from its foundation in the One, one can act in freedom. How does one get there? The hierarchy of virtues means that civic virtues will promote likeness with God, but not in the same way as intellectual virtues (I.2.3.5-10, cf. *Theaetetus* 176b). The objective is to develop intellectual virtues and the road goes through civic virtues (I.2.1.22-26 & 46-50, cf. *Republic* 500d), since these are the intellectual virtues reflected in this City-State, i.e. in this mundane world. As we have already seen, this is not the same as the urge to go into politics, nor is it to say that one automatically gets these virtues from joining politics – as indeed not all politicians have the virtues in any higher measure (cf. *Meno* 99b-c). However, it does suggest that

472. Cf. Rist (1964a) chapter 4 'Plotinus and Virtue', Wallis (1972) 82-90 and O'Meara (2003) 40-44 on the role of virtue in Plotinus.

if in one's mundane life one has no relationship to these simple virtues of the community, there is hardly any chance of being purified enough in one's soul to obtain them as intellectual virtues either, and therefore there is no great chance of reaching the One.[473] Society is in Plotinus a necessary intermediary between the particular human soul and the Absolute, but definitely not a sufficient intermediary and not as fully explained or radically emphasised as in Plato's *Laws* (875a-b, 923a-c).[474] Plotinus rather favours the doctrine of Plato's *Republic* (435e-436a), that all values of society are obtained through particular human beings (cf. *Laws* 903c-d). His political Neoplatonism is far from totalitarian, on the contrary. As distinct from the suspicions of Karl Raimund Popper, it proves that Platonism does not lead to totalitarianism as a necessary political consequence. Totalitarian temptations appear to be profoundly restrained by logically consistent Platonism.[475]

Civic virtues – enumerated in two different places by Plotinus as being on the one hand (I.2) the four from Plato's *Republic* and on the other hand (I.6.6) some of the virtues named in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* – are useful in setting limits on our desires and dissolving illusions (I.2.2.13-18). Concerning the will to rule and the corresponding position as subject to the rule of others, the central virtue of justice in the *Republic* (427e-435a, 443b-c) indeed means that one should always keep to what belongs to oneself (I.2.1.19-21, cf. in Stoic terms I.2.7.4-5). What this is, one will find out. It is about having likeness to God rather than likeness to the so-called good man: the philistine. Therefore, civic virtues must rather give way to the higher virtues as far as possible, Plotinus says (I.2.7.21-30). In this way Plotinus has not said that people can do away with civic virtues. One can only do that if one participates in some higher virtue (VI.3.16.27-31, cf. *SVF* III.280, correcting the notion of ethical necessities and non-necessities in Epicurus' *Letter to Menoiceus*, Diogenes Laertius X.130-131), i.e. ultimately in the Good itself beyond any ordinary virtue (I.8.13.7-8). This will happen for only a few.

473. O'Meara (1992b) 502-03 points to this.
474. Cf. Ousager (1998) and Schmitz (2001), as distinct from Hager (1984) 131-32.
475. As distinct from Popper (1966) 18-56, 86-119, while endorsing his last modifying remark on p. 119 and at the same time answering the main points of the inspiring attack by Ehrhardt (1953) 478-80 on the concept of political Neoplatonism as inconsistent. It appears to me that politics inspired by Christian values, his preference, shares many of the same elusive points without possessing the same urge for consistency. Irrespective of particular religious fervours, throughout Jewry, Christendom and Islam, Neoplatonism has been the main source for this urge. I believe his criticisms and judgments are themselves not entirely consistent and are biased due to his experience of Nazi Germany, cf. note 363.

On the other hand, those who actually have higher intellectual moderation are to cut themselves off and make themselves independent from the lower life as far as possible (I.2.3.5-21, I.2.7.21-30, cf. V.3.17.37-38). In this, however, there is no suggestion that they ought to leave this world; on the contrary, they acquire a higher outlook on it and beyond it instead (I.8.7.12-16, IV.4.44.20-21). In this way, they approach a more active attitude towards the Good or the One and become free and proactive (*spoudaios*, III.4.6.1, VI.8.4.7-40). Actions from here are necessarily personal, since the gateway to truth is through personal participation in Intellect (cf. VI.1.29.25-36). Universal principles from Intellect are to be applied in highly particular contexts by highly particular persons, for (VI.7.10.16-17):

> It is a virtue to be both common (*to koinon*) and peculiar (*to idion*), and wholly beautiful, since what is common is not differentiated.

If personal acts in a political context do not exactly derive directly from truth, they would in principle not deviate much from terror. Presumably with the exception of the propagation of white lies necessitated by self-defence that prove the rule (cf. *Republic* 382b-d, 389b, 459c-d), truth must be the reference point for political discussion and for political action as well (cf. VI.8.6.38-39).[476] Actions from the One, however, will take their point of departure from the very source of ethics – the Good itself, and in this way make a hyperethical impact on the world, in the sense of being without any restricting rules (cf. *Statesman* 300d-e).[477] Literally beyond good and evil in the One,[478] one has left virtues behind and will only actualise some of them as circumstances require (I.2.7.19-20 & 26-28, I.4.13.1-3), for, as Plotinus knew from the *Statesman* (260e), kings are self-directing.[479] In line with the conclusions of the previous part of this book, according to which self-determination of the One itself is precluded, self-directing action simply demands full access to Intellect as well. For within Intellect, self-determination in its truest sense is possible.[480] Sometimes, after insights undisturbed by emotional ties (over-

476. A similar reference point inspired by Neoplatonism is intriguingly suggested for modern Western democracy by Anton (2002) 15.
477. As distinct from Smith (1999) 233 implying that in Plotinus the insurmountable ideal of human behaviour is the World Soul.
478. Cf. Armstrong's preface to his 1966 translation, p. xxvii.
479. Individualism was invented neither during the Renaissance nor during industrialisation, as suggested by respectively Burckhardt (1860) and Habermas (1962).
480. Cf. section 'II.C.6. Self-determination, self-causation and self-motion' above.

riding the *Republic* 442e-443a with the proviso from the *Laws* 770c-e), this can imply sacrificing what is normally considered good, i.e. even one's life, property, friends, children, wife and homeland (VI.8.6.14-18, I.4.8.18-24, cf. IV.3.32.1-2).

So, while not all contemplation produces action, all creative actions arise from contemplation (III.8.5.17-30). This was also true of Minos' legislation on Crete (VI.9.7.20-26), if it was really the consequence of contemplation only. In fact, I believe the context makes it clear that the unification with God undergone by Minos strongly suggests it could not have been contemplative or theistic only (cf. VI.9.11.20-21).[481] We have seen in the previous parts of this book that ultimate unification means identification with the One, which is absolute activity and absolute motion, and that the causal nexus within the human soul consequently must lead to some sort of breaking action.[482]

It could well be quite another thing, however, if a person does not ascend further than to the level of Intellect and in fact never unites with the One. That man of "second rank" will be the subject of the following short discussion,[483] as to whether action in this world, including political action, is after all a necessary consequence of any contemplation. Here the answer "no" has already been given above, and Plotinus simply repeats Plato's words from the simile of the cave (*Republic* 519c-d), that the one who has seen much, might become disinclined to engage in political matters (VI.9.7.26-28), cf. *Laws* (900a-b). As is often the case in Plotinus, the consideration ends abruptly, and one does not get any clear message from other places as to whether this is a disinclination that remains if the person contemplates further. In Plato's *Republic* (443e), such unification seems to lead to activity: not least political activity. Plotinus does say at least that (I.4.10.26-33) the virtuous person does

481. As distinct from O'Meara (1993b) 69-70, O'Meara (1997a) 38 and O'Meara (1999b) 282-83. For instance, O'Meara (1997a) 38 reads: "Ou, ajoute Plotin, on pourrait désirer rester dans l'union contemplative avec l'Un, jugeant la politique indigne." It is not clear whether O'Meara excludes it, but the possibility of a union of 'monistic' identification with the One in the passage is not directly indicated either, as O'Meara (1997a) 39, for instance, while adding a quite relevant modifying footnote referring to "l'union extatique" (i.e. with the One) distinguished from "l'union intellective" (i.e. with Intellect), still suggests a contemplative unification with the One: "Mais je pense que le passage plotinien est aussi animé par la montée des futurs philosophes-rois de la *République* de Platon vers la vision de l'idée du Bien, identifiée par Plotin avec l'Un […]."

482. Cf. chapter 'II.C. Determinism disrupted' above, especially section 'II.C.7. Puppets, slaves or assistants?'

483. Cf. the 'men of second rank' in chapter 'I.B. Unification with Intellect' above.

what he ought to do without the hesitations implied by further consideration, since an acquired virtue (courage for instance) acts as a power itself (II.5.2.33-35). However, from the context of the model, the *Republic* (520b), it appears that only if one has been reared in an ideal city-state, does one have the exterior ethical duty – regardless of any disinclination – to go down into the cave again for the sake of those who were left behind there.[484]

Now it seems as if Plotinus might be stuck here. Has he not declared this whole world as being – in philosophical afterthought – exactly a city-state with the best just and inescapable laws, ruled by Providence in nothing less than an exemplary way? So one ought to do one's duty as a citizen of the city of the world (cf. *Laws* 856b-c, 900a-d). The descent (*kathodos*) of souls in order to perfect the world (IV.8.1.46-50, IV.8.5.2) can perhaps also be understood (IV.8.4.28, IV.8.5.3) as in some degree corresponding to the descent (*katabasis*) into the cave spoken of by Plato in the *Republic* (520c).[485] Above,[486] we already noted how Plotinus seems to say that one should rule like a man taking care of his sick body, knowing that anything bodily always will be sick unto death (IV.4.45.46-51, III.2.5.7, cf. *Phaedo* 95d, 118a, *First Alcibiades* 132a). Similarly, a philosopher and statesman must rule his world with the World Soul and ultimately the One as his ideal (cf. *Laws* 902d-903a). Rejecting Aristotle's criticism of Plato's *Republic* in the *Politics* (1261a15-24), according to Plotinus no infinite regress of unities would follow from this, since not all persons would need to become identical unities – having parts all with identical unities, again having parts all with identical unities and so on.[487] According to the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles it would not be possible either, for if they were strictly unities, they would not have parts but simply be the same unity, the One. Only because the One, as we have seen, has a different particular causal nexus as the Self of particular human beings,[488] the unity of the singular citizen will be decisive enough to let unity come through in the city-state or the world at large (cf. *Republic* 423b-d, 435e-436a).[489]

484. Rist (1964a) 180 and Jurado (1985) 105-06 forget about this necessary condition for the obligation in the *Republic* when they dismiss Plotinus as simply being unplatonic in this respect.
485. Cf. Smith (1999) 234 and, especially, O'Meara (2003) 43-44.
486. In chapter 'III.A. Coming to imperial Rome'.
487. McCabe (1994) 268-70 notes this apparent problem of infinite regress of unities in the *Republic*.
488. Cf. section 'II.C.1. The causal nexus of ultimate unification' above.
489. Cf. Helm (1995) 242.

Still, if one contemplates these truths, can one avoid taking an active part in this world as far as possible according to one's insight (cf. *Republic* 347c-d, *Seventh Letter* 328b-d, *Ninth Letter* 358a-b), with everyone becoming a "link of the city-state" as a whole (cf. *Republic* 519e-520a)? Well, the answer may be no, but the immediate world is not the only world (cf. *Republic* 592a-b), for the wise belong to a world of a higher reality than this. Moreover, the wise cannot fulfil what they, from one point of view, perhaps ought to, just by virtue of their wisdom. Though they will have the best intentions of everyone to prosper and never to suffer any evil (I.4.11.12-13), it is not only up to them (VI.8.5.1-5). The less wise and the evil do not want the good brought to power; they are too keen on keeping power for themselves. And one cannot demand of the wise – who live far better lives than any exterior wealth or rule of men would ever give them – that they become rulers in this world. The real, inward power remains here and in the beyond with the wise and wealthy in the interior sense (III.1.8.14-15, I.4.11.13-14). This is so, since material poverty tempts meanness, while material wealth easily tempts vanity and all exterior power tempts tyrannous behaviour led by inferior passions (III.1.8.15-17, cf. III.1.9.4-16, VI.8.1.22-30, VI.8.2). The bad, amid all their vices, simply do not have any just claim to be ruled by the good by any exterior power (III.2.9.10-12).[490]

So, Plotinus is certainly not a supporter of any basic or crude Aristotelian (*Nicomachean Ethics* in a certain superficial reading) justice of deeds,[491] and he denies even happiness of deeds. For well-being is a state obtained without any particular deeds having been done (I.2.6.1-3 & 23-27, I.5.10.3-12). He delivers a little case study, which in a slightly paradoxical manner establishes this point, and which supposes as a fact that good deeds do not necessarily make the man who does them a good man: the good man may feel joy at the salvation of his country, even if the saviour is an evil man. (One might think here of one of the soldier emperors of the time, e.g., Gallienus, who perhaps "on the occasion of the salvation of the homeland (*ob conservationem patriae*)" from the intrusion of Germanic tribes around 260 CE issued an official coin

490. Cf. Armstrong's fine note to his 1967 translation of III.2.9.

491. Concerning justice taken in a religious sense, Luther was infuriated by a passage like the one in the *Nicomachean Ethics* 1103a34-1103b1: "[…] we become just by doing just acts […]" without regarding the practical wisdom requested by Aristotle as any decisive, obtainable opportunity for mankind, cf. Nitzsch (1883) 15-16.

of celebration,[492] cf. also *Eighth Letter* 353a-c on the tyrants delivering Sicily from the barbarians.) Good, like evil, is not in the act itself – because then it would make the evil saviour good. However, there might still be actions that will produce some good, e.g., peace and persistence of the country, irrespectively of the goodness or the badness of the man who acts (I.5.10.12-23).[493] So here Augustine, writing later, might not only have found some suitable material for his argument against Pelagius; he might also have found material for his argument against Donatus.

Plotinus is hardly a follower of any material justice of deeds. On the contrary, he is a spokesman for a regular spiritual justice of deeds. Unreasonable men (*anthrôpoi anoêtoi*, cf. *Phaedo* 80b, *Phaedrus* 270a) have not yet sufficient likeness to God, since participation demands exertion (II.3.15.13-22, II.9.9.52-60). The rules of this activist justice are perhaps not too easily understood by the man in the street or by the wise, but there will always be a sufficient law independent of situations, even if this law comes down to only "the One" – Unity. Then, just actions for Plotinus will become as Plato pointed out for the best mortal king: without further laws than capturing the right moment. In Soul, this special instance of the right measure can only be approximated (IV.4.17.6-7), while in and from the One, it is actually attained (VI.8.18.43-46, *VP* 15.17, cf. *Republic* 370b-c, *Theaetetus* 146a, *Statesman* 284e, 293e-294b, 305d, *Philebus* 66a, *Parmenides* 156d-e).[494] Personal attainment of justice indeed seems to depend synergistically on the One also, but the One in fact lets its sun shine unrestrictedly on good and evil alike; the difference is in the subjects (VI.3.22.22-25, cf. *Matthew* 5.45-46). So there is neither any sudden grace towards transgressors and aggressors (III.2.17.14-16) nor any corruption or deficiency as connected with the forensic sense of the *sûngnômon* of the judges in Athens or the *gratia* of the judges in Rome, but a strict law instead

492. Cf. Wundt (1919) 42 who refers to Zosimus *New History* I.37-38 and Johannes Zonaras *Abridgment of History* XII.24, whereas Heinemann (1921a) 117 n. 1 finds the suggested inspiration questionable. Alföldi (1930a) 62, 68 lists the coin but has his reservations as to its genuineness. The precise year of Gallienus' victory near Milan is uncertain as well; datings vary from 258 to 261 CE, though Zosimus seems to relegate it to some time after the Persian capture of Emperor Valerian in 260 CE.
493. Partly as distinct from Graeser (1972) 113.
494. Cf. Laurent (1999) 53-54 and also Santa Cruz (2000) 206-10. Remarkably, this Platonic doctrine of sufficient reasons for acting in time is carried on in, e.g., Anselm *Why God Became Man* II.5 & 17-18 and Leibniz (1686a) §§ 6-7.

(III.2.9.10-13, cf. *Apology* 35b-d, 38d-39a).[495] Or if there is grace after all, as in the *Laws* (757d-758a), it will be parasitic upon ordinary law, and grace will have its final sufficient reason in the highest law: the One or the Good itself. Ordinary law, however, is simply expressed in the law of cause and effect and consequently in the justice of reincarnation. In allotting merit to the ones who search for freedom, and punishment to the ones who enslave themselves and others (cf. *Republic* 615b, *Phaedrus* 256b), the bad masters in this life are made slaves in the next (III.2.13.1-6, cf. III.2.4.23-24). These matters of the relation between law and grace may not only have a soteriological consequence but a social one as well. Since man is, at least in part, a political animal for Plotinus, as man certainly was for Aristotle, it seems that we can infer that there must be a dynamic balance between atomisation and collectivisation in social matters (VI.2.11.22-26, cf. VI.9.8.13-16, III.3.1.7-12, Heraclitus DK 22B10, *Statesman* 309b-c, 311b-c and, again, *Laws* 757d-758a):

> […] for all particular things do not strive to get away from each other, but towards each other and towards themselves; and all souls would like to come to unity, following their own nature. And the One is on both sides of them; for it is that from which they come and to which they go […].[496]

Humans have a higher degree of worth than do most other living beings when they are not acting tyrannically in nature and society, but, instead, are acting like givers of beauty and order (II.9.13.18-20, III.2.9.28-31, III.2.14.20-22).[497] In proportion to one's excellence one should act graciously (*eumenôs*) towards one's neighbour (II.9.9.44-45 & 75-76, I.4.15.21-25, III.2.9.25-27, cf. V.1.2.50-51, II.9.18.42-44), for the Good must be gentle (*êpion*, cf. *VP* 23.1-2), kind and gracious itself (V.5.12.33-34).[498] Education usually makes souls better than before (III.2.8.16-21, cf. *Laws* 766a). Likewise, if good people acted more from real insight and even took over power, goodness obviously would

495. Cf. Dodds (1960) 7.
496. Cf. the interpretation of VI.9.8.13-16 delivered by Schicker (1991).
497. Cf. Blakeley (1997), Westra (2002b) and Lea (2002) on Plotinus as a source of environmentalism and deep ecology.
498. This as modification of Rist (1994) 149, who writes of the Platonists that though they might be kind to their fellow human beings, their kindness is not constitutive for their goal in the beyond, as it is for Christians. On the other hand, according to Armstrong (1967b) 26, Augustine was unplatonically and illegitimately narrowing the earthly city in such a way that it only could consist of the Church as the primary objective for love of one's neighbour.

increase (III.2.9.18-19, cf. III.2.14.20-22). Even though some are actually free from evil (I.8.5.29-32), they do not normally act from real insight and take over power in this world (III.2.9.19-21, II.9.13.18-33, III.3.3.11-14), for "all things become evil in us, though they are not so up there" (II.3.11.10-11, cf. III.2.4.38-42). This world stays what it is, a reflection of Intellect, not Intellect itself. Though the actions of particular citizens might affect politics in the city-state or even the world of the Soul hypostasis favourably, they do not really make this world better at large, i.e. improve it ontologically or henologically (III.3.7.5-6, cf. *Epinomis* 973c). They can only contribute to sustaining it in relative safety (cf. III.4.4.7, *Laws* 903c-d). Nevertheless, that too is important. Virtue only proves itself as, for instance, bravery, helpfulness and liberality confronted with war, sickness and poverty in this world (cf. II.3.9.18-19), though virtue, rooted as it is in Intellect, certainly would prefer there to be no war, sickness or poverty at all (VI.8.5.8-20, I.2.1.11-12). Even though the parts of Soul are at war with each other, the whole Soul, contemplating Intellect, is not at war with itself (III.2.16.31-39). Moreover, true intellectual bravery would already have become liberal intellectually and, subsequently, overcome Intellect, coinciding with the liberator itself, the One.

One could of course consider whether there are no actual qualitative developments in world history. Obviously, there are such improvements (IV.4.36.21-24), some of which are due to natural selection and evolution (II.3.12.5-8, II.3.16.6-15, III.2.9.31-37), but there is also degeneration (II.3.16.27-29, cf. Hesiod *Works and Days* 106-201) even to the point where a life of only marginal value is achieved, which could only feel disgusted with itself (II.3.17.18-25), though such a life is after all better than never to have come into existence at all (III.2.15.28-29). And there are corresponding downfalls into new shapes and forms of evil (cf. I.8.15.23-28). Malice of that kind will be an active force, distinguished from merely passive inferiority (II.9.13.27-33, cf. *Republic* 519a, *Laws* 896d-897d). In any case, Providence works towards perfection by way of both deficiencies (III.3.7.5-8, II.3.18.1-5, cf. *Genesis* 3.1-15).

Another argument is worth considering in this connection. Due to consistent employment of the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles, Plotinus dismisses the Stoic conception of an eternal recurrence of identical world-periods in favour of the conception of time as one single life of the Soul (IV.4.9). Consequently, world-periods within that life, even an unlimited number of them, must be different from as well as continuous with each other. Descents of souls must also be distinct, while all souls are linked together in a single, continuously developing history (III.2.13, cf. VI.4.16.1-7).

Any real evolution, then, is not a part of material world history, but rather

a world history of the Soul (V.2.1.18-19, III.7.11.20-21, IV.3.12.32-39, II.9.4.1-9, III.4.1.8-10). It sounds quite promising when Plotinus in almost Christian terms says that (V.1.3.12-15):

> Since then its existence derives from Intellect, Soul is intellectual, and its intellect is in discursive reasonings, and its perfection comes from Intellect, like a father who brings to maturity (*ekthrepsantos*) a son whom he begat imperfect in comparison with himself.

Soul will always intend to make an increase in its historical being (III.7.11.57-59) and make something finer than before (VI.7.6.25-26, VI.7.7.5-6). Whether this is really accomplished is another issue, for, presumably as an almost adequate metaphor, we are told that (II.3.16.33-36, cf. *Timaeus* 43c, *Laws* 905e-906a):

> […] Soul is like a farmer who, when he has sown or planted, is always putting right what rainstorms or continuous frosts or gales of wind have spoiled.

No matter whether politics or history really develop towards something better or worse, one can easily get out of concord with the general pattern of movement and become trampled like a tortoise by a dance company (II.9.7.33-39).

Even when Plotinus at one point says that mankind is always lifted up towards the divine (III.2.9.19-24), this constitutes a real tension in his philosophy, when the hierarchy of hypostases means that ahistorically they will always remain the same (I.5: *On whether Well-Being increases with Time*, cf. VI.5.11.14-31), while, in consequence, the theodicy warranted by Providence means that there must be some substantial progress in history (cf. *Cratylus* 412c-d):[499] a liberation of souls from the enslaved darkness of the cave into the freer sunlight of the One (I.9.17-19, II.9.6.6-10, cf. *Republic* 514a).

499. Daunas (1848) 154 arrives at the harsh but philosophically not too deeply considered positivist-progressionist verdict of Plotinus that "l'étrange idée d'un progrès tout retrospectif est une chimère et un contre-sens."

Chapter III.C

The "Plotinus sarcophagus"

Not all philosophers, or even all political philosophers, have their portraits painted or sculpted and just a few political philosophies have readily identifiable, monumental counterparts. Did Plotinus and his Neoplatonism have such influence in contemporary society?

One might perhaps just as well ask whether wishful thinking can come true. The archaeologist Wolfgang Fischer-Bossert has recently argued conclusively that five marble heads, most of them for half a century believed with varying degrees of conviction to depict Plotinus,[500] on simple chronological grounds cannot represent him after all. The heads are Severian, i.e. earlier than the Roman career of Plotinus.[501] In addition, only four of them are replicas of the same type, whereas the fifth is quite another type. At least three of these heads were found in Ostia, and at least two of these again, but one of each type, were found in the courtyard of a public bath installed in a former place of worship already torn down around 230 CE, at a time when Plotinus was around twenty-five years old and long before he had arrived in Rome or could have become sufficiently famous as a philosopher to deserve being portrayed in its seaport.[502]

500. Cf. L'Orange (1951), Calza (1953), L'Orange (1955-57), L'Orange (1961) and, partly, Richter (1965) 289. One or more of the heads have been used as a representation of Plotinus until fairly recently, e.g., by Bracker (1975) 764-67, 770-71 with plates I-III and as front cover illustration of *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus* edited by L.P. Gerson (1996).
501. Cf. the original dating by Raissa Calza under her maiden name de Chirico (1945), supported by von Heintze (1963a) 319, von Heintze (1963b) 52-53 n. 133, Edwards (1994) 146 and Fischer-Bossert (2001) 145. Von Heintze (1963b) even suggested that the four heads publicly known by then represent not just two but three different men.
502. Cf. Fischer-Bossert (2001) 145-46.

Among ancient archaeological remains there is one other depiction of a male figure that perhaps could represent Plotinus. It appears on an immense sarcophagus front, which is now situated in the Gregorian Profane Museum of the Vatican and is reproduced on the cover of this book. Naturally, we cannot compare the features found on the sarcophagus with the look of the marble head, since this has been excluded as a representation of Plotinus.[503] Instead, the undoubtedly philosophical character of the scene depicted and the different datings of the sarcophagus at ten years on either side of the philosopher's time of death suggest a far stronger case for him having left his stamp on this particular sarcophagus.

In any case, there can be no denial that the increasingly philosophical influence on the choice of motifs on Roman sarcophagi coincides with the career of Plotinus in Rome (244-70 CE), particularly his career as a writing philosopher (253-70 CE), and extends over a brief additional period corresponding to a further development of his posthumous reputation.[504] It is to Plotinus that we can attribute the primary responsibility, albeit not sole responsibility, for the development of a philosophical environment and corresponding mindset among the leading circles of culture in the city of Rome. Philosophical motifs appeared on Roman sarcophagi before Plotinus came to the city but they grew perceptibly in seriousness and influence while he was around.

Among comparable philosopher sarcophagi that probably all were made in the city are the sarcophagus of the praetorian centurion and equestrian Peregrinus with wife (ca. 240-50 CE), now at the Torlonia Museum in Rome,[505] the crypto-Christian sarcophagus from Via Salaria (ca. 250 CE),[506] the "brother

503. L'Orange (1951) 21 with n. 6, 22 with n. 1 and L'Orange (1955-57) 477-78 thought that what he supposed to be the original marble head of Plotinus was created in the 240s-250s, while the relics from Ostia are all replicas dating from the 250s-260s CE. It would be out of the question to consider that the marble heads and the later, central figure of the sarcophagus both depict Plotinus veraciously, for the central figure of the sarcophagus shows no sign of baldness as opposed to the marble heads, and one does not normally grow younger in the course of time! This must have been another, albeit implicit, reason why L'Orange (1951) 29 with n. 2 rejected the thought that the figure of the sarcophagus could be Plotinus.

504. Cf. the surveys of philosophical motifs from the period in, e.g., Gerke (1940) and Ewald (1999).

505. Cf. the dating of Ewald (1999) 152.

506. Gerke (1940) 36, 246-50, 247 n. 1 & *passim* refers to the shepherd as a Christian symbol in the third century CE but, in fact, the shepherd is a preceding distinctive metaphor within Platonism as well. Cf. sections 'III.B.1. The King', 'III.B.5. War' and 'III.B.9. Dialogue, democracy and human rights' above.

sarcophagus" (ca. 260-68 CE) representing a Gallienic official,[507] now at the National Museum in Naples, and the sarcophagus of a 'philosophical wonderboy' (ca. 280 CE), now at the Vatican Museums. We do not know all the material that has existed, and one could argue on the one hand that only a minor part of ancient art has survived years of wear and tear, plunder and reuse for other purposes. At the same time, one could also argue that such parts deliberately preserved throughout the years could hardly have been the worst. Judging only from what remains today, however, visible philosophical influence on Roman sculpture culminates with the "Plotinus sarcophagus".[508]

Whereas philosophical references are not too unusual in the third century CE, this philosopher sarcophagus is one of unusually large dimensions. Its most striking feature in comparison with other more jovial and frequently rather jesting philosopher sarcophagi, however, is its high, "stiffened" style. Philosophy as a subject is taken extremely seriously here. Much of the high style is simply due to comparatively longer limbs of the figures and a delicate, stereometric variation of presentation. Three core figures are carved in depth as high relief. Another factor contributing to the high style is the faultless symmetry despite the rather unbound appearance of each single figure towards the opposite, immediate impression. The hair of the philosophers has indications of having been coloured,[509] the figures are carefully carved and, altogether, the sarcophagus is of an outstanding quality, exhibiting a number of the characteristics of the style that Gerhart Rodenwaldt and Andreas Alföldi identified as 'Gallienic renaissance',[510] i.e. a reaction to tendencies of profuse congestion and complexity in coeval Roman art, in the guise of a partial reversion to classical stereotypes.[511]

Rodenwaldt was also the first to consider the possibility that a representation of Plotinus appears on the sarcophagus.[512] As he was well aware, it can

507. Cf. the dating of Himmelmann-Wildschütz (1962), Fittschen (1972) 503 and Ewald (1999) 201.
508. Cf. Koch & Sichtermann (1982) 204-06, who give prominence to the "Peregrinus sarcophagus" and the "Plotinus sarcophagus" out of a number of philosopher sarcophagi from the beginning of the third and into the beginnings of the fourth century CE.
509. Cf. Ewald (1999) 168.
510. Cf. Rodenwaldt (1923) 120, 122, Alföldi (1930b) 263-81, Rodenwaldt (1939) 556-58, Mathew (1943) 68, Jensen (1948) 53-56. The traditional Roman versus philhellenic aspects of the concept are discussed by Bergmann (1977) 47-50.
511. Cf. Pelikán (1965) 136-37, modifying Rodenwaldt.
512. Cf. Rodenwaldt (1923) 122, Rodenwaldt (1936) 104. Richter (1965) 289 still recognises the option that the portrait of the sarcophagus could be "an invented portrait" of Plotinus.

probably never be proven that the sarcophagus depicts Plotinus. In fact, it is now widely believed that a couple of circumstances preclude that possibility, and that the man depicted seated in the middle, the deceased person, is only an amateur philosopher, albeit apparently quite a serious one. Philosophy does not need to have been his profession, perhaps rather just an intended mindset of either himself or his nearest relations.[513] According to this view, he could be any dignitary – perhaps even Emperor Gallienus.

The spectacular suggestions that the figure represents either of these two notable persons are species of the general view that it represents some dignitary. However, after a long period during which archaeology and art history have had to deal with a number of dubious identifications, the general view based on the study of the history of styles obviously remains the most certain and reliable.

That laborious approach is the assumed precondition for my discussion in the following, in which my aim is to present an interpretation of the sarcophagus that emphasises its Neoplatonic features in order to extort from it some of the contemporary social and, perhaps, immediate political impact of Plotinus' Neoplatonism. As we shall see, such features are at hand,[514] no matter who the central person happens to be. If the person really represents Plotinus, a more profound Neoplatonic interpretation is possible. While pursuing a radical interpretation along these lines, I will try to meet some of the objections raised. Whether or not the hypothetical identification of Plotinus on the sarcophagus is wrong in the end, however, the radical Neoplatonic interpretation will eventually shed light on both of the other two available interpretations, namely that the seated man represents Emperor Gallienus or just some other, less extraordinary Roman dignitary. Firstly, then, let us suppose that the seated male figure is the philosopher Plotinus.

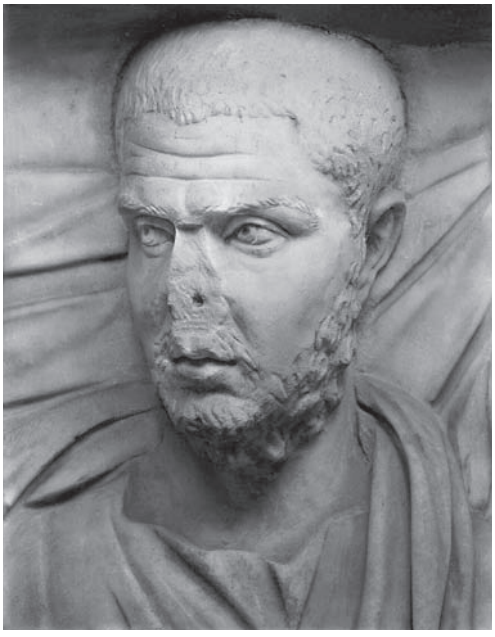
513. Cf. Marrou (1938) 49, 197-207. Against Rodenwaldt's hypothesis he objects that there is no inscription confirming that the sarcophagus was dedicated to Plotinus. However, only some surviving sarcophagi have inscriptions, and there is strictly no inscription telling us the opposite or ascribing it to someone else.

514. Cf. Rodenwaldt (1936) 105, Andreae (1963) 731.

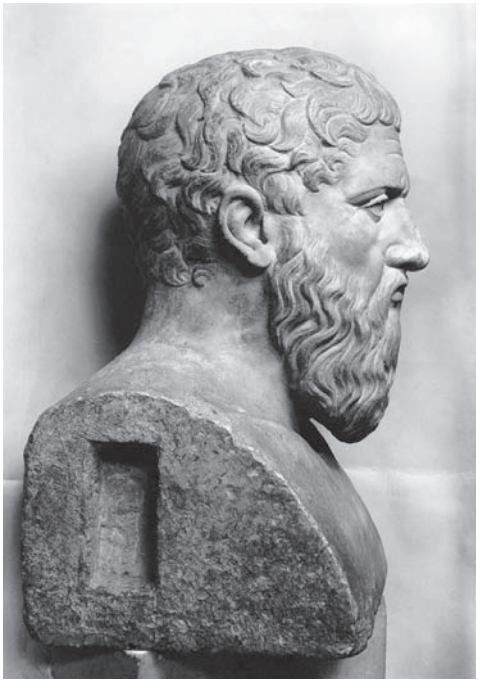
III.C.1. The chair of Plotinus?

The dignified male figure seated in the middle partly matches the description Porphyry gives of Plotinus. "His intellect visibly lit up his face when he was speaking" (*VP* 13.5-7), presumably also, when, in his lectures, he was reading and commenting on philosophical books (*VP* 14.2-18):

> He puts things shortly and abounds more in thoughts than in words; he generally expresses himself in a tone of rapt inspiration (*enthousiôn*), and states what he himself really feels about the matter and not what has been handed down by tradition. His writings, however, are full of concealed Stoic and Peripatetic doctrines. Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, in particular, is concentrated in them. […] In the meetings of the school he used to have the commentaries read, perhaps of Severus, perhaps of Cronius or Numenius or Gaius or Atticus, and among the Peripatetics of Aspasius, Alexander, Adrastus, and others that were available. But he did not just speak straight out of these books but took a distinctive personal line in his consideration, and brought the mind of Ammonius to bear on the investigations in hand. He quickly absorbed what was read, and would give the sense of some profound subject of study in a few words and pass on.



Ill. 1. Seated gentleman. Gregorian Profane Museum, Vatican. (Photo: Faraglia, German Archaeological Institute 35.1983)



Ill. 2. Plato. Hall of Muses, Vatican. (Photo: Faraglia, German Archaeological Institute 34.2017)

The solemn look of the central figure of the sarcophagus over his book scroll (ill. 1) corresponds to the significance ascribed to vision and gaze (*theôria*) within Plotinus' philosophy.[515] His head is not just on the slant to the right; he is also looking slantwise upwards to the right. The figure is apparently envisioning subjects of his book in a sort of *Wesensschau*.

One circumstance of the setting that immediately springs to mind once we assume that the seated man is a philosopher, whether amateur or professional, is that the other male figures must be philosophers as well. A necessary (though not sufficient) and particular masculine sign of being a philosopher in most of antiquity was the beard.[516] All the males shown here have beards.

Due to typology that was well established back then, the bearded man on his right flank cannot be any other person than Socrates.[517] This identification is certain to such an extent that it is independent of whether or not the seated figure is indeed a philosopher or whether or not he or any of the other

515. Cf. Rössler (1976) 506.
516. Cf. Zanker (1995) 217-33.
517. Cf. Zanker (1995) 278.

figures had been present. We do not need to suspect that all the males except Socrates were supposed to be rhetoricians as a result of the fact that, unlike the philosopher Socrates, they are not simply wearing a cloak, the Greek *pallium* or *himation*, corresponding to the toga of a Roman citizen, but also the tunic (Gr. *chitôn*) underneath. While Socrates is presented as the original, almost savage philosopher, there could be a number of quite contemporary philosophers among these other more civilised men.[518]

Once Socrates is identified, an identification of the man on the seated man's left flank standing upright at the remnants of what perhaps has been a sundial[519] becomes far easier. He must be a comparable philosopher due to simple symmetry. Few philosophers would be comparable to Socrates, but since we grant that Socrates principally was made famous by the writings of his pupil Plato, this literally quite highbrow figure, the tallest of all of them, could possibly represent Plato.[520]

Fortunately, a comparison with what must have been a standard portrait of Plato at the time (ill. 2), a copy of an original from the fourth century BCE, which Silanion perhaps made while the model was still alive (cf. Diogenes Laertius III.25), seems to confirm the impression that the figure could have been meant to represent Plato. Even when it cannot be predicted precisely how the product of a fusion between the traditional Plato type and the current style of the sarcophagus would turn out, this figure could well have been the outcome. If we suppose, further, that the seated man is the Neoplatonist Plotinus, the conclusion that the male figure to his left represents Plato becomes almost inevitable. In Plotinus' writings, Socrates is mentioned by name around forty times while Plato is named around fifty times. Usually, however, Plotinus just refers, often with the formula "he says", to Plato and his writings without even mentioning his name.

If the philosophers standing on the flanks are Socrates and Plato respectively, who is the third male philosopher standing closer and turning his head towards the central figure? Rodenwaldt suggested him to be Porphyry.[521]

518. Partly as distinct from Ewald (1999) 93-94.
519. Cf. Wegner (1966) 47, Ewald (1999) 168.
520. Himmelmann-Wildschütz has inferred that the figure originally was meant to represent a woman – a Muse perhaps – because the slip, i.e. the tunic, is showing. Answering this objection, Ewald (1999) 168 raises doubt as to whether this fragment with the lower part of a figure and, quite oddly, only one foot revealed belongs to the same sarcophagus at all. Perhaps one could also doubt whether a long *chitôn* on an Attic philosopher necessarily would be conceived of as a feminine distinction.
521. Cf. Rodenwaldt (1936) 104.

Ill. 3. Aristotle. National Museum of the Thermae, Rome. (Photo: Vasari, German Archaeological Institute 36.977)

However, an "Eastern" almond-shaped eye in profile or other features of the figure are not sufficient indications that this is Porphyry of Tyre (cf. *VP* 17.6-10, 20.91, 21.14), and we cannot compare and check with any other sources describing the appearance of Porphyry, except for the circumstance that Porphyry was thirty years old in the late summer of 263 CE (cf. *VP* 4.8-9, 5.2-5) and so must have been thirty-seven in the late summer of 270 CE, when Plotinus died. Moreover, only a posterity far later than the third century CE assigned to Porphyry a philosophical position that compared to and even for many medieval centuries overshadowed the genius of Plotinus. Porphyry's writing of the *Life of Plotinus* as a preface to his edition of Plotinus' writings more than thirty years after Plotinus' death merely promotes Porphyry as the most important pupil (cf. *VP* 21.9-18, 24.1-5). Unlike the two other known publishers of Plotinus' philosophy, Amelius and Eustochius the physician, Porphyry had the great advantage as an editor in that he was educated by

Ill. 4. Aristotle. Royal Portal, Chartres Cathedral of Our Lady, 1145-55 CE.

the distinguished philologist Longinus (*VP* 7.49-51, 14.18-20). Nevertheless, Porphyry definitely does not proclaim himself – for the most part, at least – as Plotinus' closest pupil. He just says that he was among the nearest friends (*VP* 7.49-51). The closest and most faithful pupil of Plotinus in almost all the years Plotinus spent in Rome was, Porphyry tells us, Amelius. Porphyry was only with Plotinus six years, while Amelius was with Plotinus four times longer, twenty-four years in total (*VP* 3.38-44, 7.1-5, 18.8-23). According to Porphyry's own quotation and subsequent paraphrase of a preface to the book of his former teacher Longinus, "the most discerning critic of our times" (*VP* 20.1-2, 21.18-19), Longinus places Amelius right after the master Plotinus in terms of philosophical reputation (*VP* 20.14-15 & 32-33 & 68-71 & 74-81, 21.1-16), while Porphyry is only placed next in order as a common friend (*VP* 20.90-91, 21.13-14). In terms of both friendship in general and philosophy in particular, then, Amelius rather than Porphyry would be considered

for a place right next to Plotinus. Unfortunately, we cannot check with other depictions of Amelius either. Under no circumstances, however, could the stature of either Amelius or Porphyry be philosophically comparable to that of either Socrates or Plato.

In the eyes of the ancients, among important non-materialist philosophers of the past, only Aristotle, the principal pupil of Plato, would sustain that part. The central, standing male philosopher could just as well be the round-headed Aristotle. Despite parallels with, for instance, the "Ludovisi battle sarcophagus" at the National Museum of the Thermae in Rome, the chevelure is not necessarily a sign of the model being a barbarian, but is here rather just an indication of his having an untamed inquisitive mind.[522] Almond-shaped eyes do not exclude that interpretation. The standard portrait of Aristotle (at the Museum of the Thermae as well, ill. 3), probably like similar replicas stemming from an original of the late fourth century BCE that was made while the model was still alive (cf. Diogenes Laertius V.51), has a slightly similar feature. Allowing an extended interpolation of typology from that portrait of Aristotle to the portrait of Aristotle on the, admittedly, far later Royal Portal of the Chartres Cathedral of Our Lady from the twelfth century CE (ill. 4), the figure on the sarcophagus bears sufficient resemblance. The enlargement of the eye could be just the artist's peculiar, almost Egyptian style (as regards the displacement of ordinary perspective) of showing eyes in profile. Moreover, the other persons are endowed with somewhat similar eyes, except for the almost full frontal eyes of the central figure that really stick out as envisioning things.

If the figure with a contrasting, single, perhaps intentionally conceived cyclopean eye is Aristotle, this circumstance would in a way correspond to what Porphyry, with some obvious Aristotelian sympathies of his own, reports on Plotinus' school, namely that it read Aristotelian commentators and that many Peripatetic doctrines are sunk in Plotinus' writings, in which in particular, according to Porphyry, almost the whole of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is condensed (*VP* 14.4-7). Porphyry's testimony is an ironically positive way of presenting Aristotle's influence. Aristotle was so to speak always present in Plotinus' lectures as an interlocutor, not always as a friend and ally but at times – and at variance with Porphyry's crypto-Neoaristotelian harmonious report – definitely rather as a whipping-boy and a target of Plotinus' sarcas-

522. Cf. Alföldi (1930b) 276-78, von Heintze (1959) 189-90.

tically sharp Neoplatonic and, consequently, deeply anti-Aristotelian polemics (cf. especially VI.1-3).[523]

The apparently most difficult point for an identification of the seated man with Plotinus is his age. If this figure is supposed to depict Plotinus, the philosopher must have been severely rejuvenated compared to, e.g., the feeble appearance of Plotinus at his time of death as a sixty-six-year old in 270 CE (cf. *VP* 2.1-31).[524] Within art history, though, it is widely accepted that the moment of depiction is not straight away the same as the life stage depicted. Recognizing this principle when making comparisons with the other male figures on the sarcophagus, we discover that they are really all depicted at approximately the same age, probably because the artist is symbolically representing the co-eternity of all these philosophers at the Isles of the Blest (*Phaedo* 82b-c, 114c, 115d, *Republic* 519c, cf. *VP* 22.34 & 45-63, 23.28-40). This common age was not reached as an average of their ages on standard portraits but was the traditional age of a man's bloom at the age of forty years, i.e. the age of Plotinus when he arrived in Rome. For instance, Socrates does not look old, but just ugly – as he always did according to tradition. Both Socrates and Plato seem to have been portrayed as at least ten years younger than their traditional age on standard portraits, while Aristotle, correspondingly, seems to have been made perhaps five years younger than his apparent age on the standard portrait. We should therefore re-consider the timeless appearance of a philosopher like Plotinus (cf. I.4.14, III.7.11.1-4, *VP* 1.1-2.7), in as much as true philosophers standing in the Socratic-Platonic tradition will appear to be out of fashion most of the time.

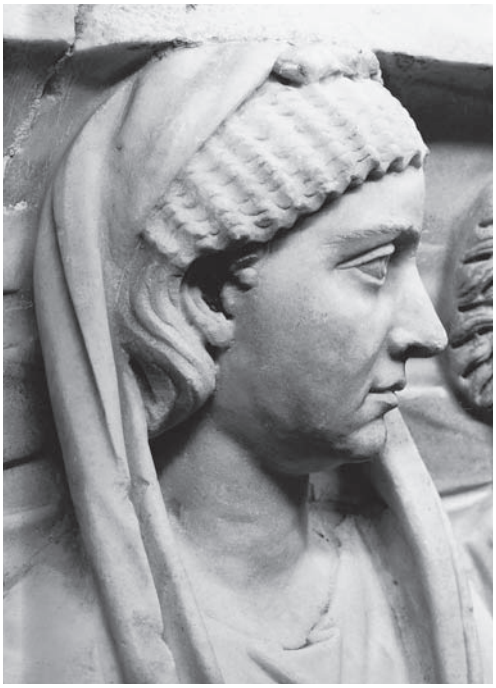
The three men standing in the background are consequently presented in low relief as ideal type portraits, as distinct from the seated man and the two women in quite prominent high relief in the front. An additional contrast is the dense chevelure of the seated man as opposed to the looser locks of the men in the background. These contrasts signal that the seated man is a more veristic portrait of a contemporary, or recently deceased person.[525] This

523. Cf., e.g., Gerson (1994a) 225-26, Gerson (1994b), Ousager (1994), Ousager (1995a), Ousager (1995b-96), Natali (1999), Chiaradonna (2002), Gerson (2002) and Ousager (2003). Several elements of Plotinus' anti-Aristotelian criticism have been touched upon in the previous parts and chapters of this book.

524. Cf. L'Orange's related reasons for denouncing the figure's identification with Plotinus in note 503 above.

525. Cf. points made by Ms. Stine Birk Toft, Department of Classical Archaeology, Aarhus University, in conversation, December 2003.

▲ *Ill. 5. Empress Salonina. Bronze medallion, 254-55 CE. Medallion Cabinet, National Library, Paris. (Photo: Gnecchi (1912) plate 155.14)*



▶ *Ill. 6a. Lady on the seated gentleman's right. (Photo: Vatican Museums XXX.10.3)*

circumstance does not preclude the possibility that he was idealised or that other contemporary persons also were idealised and on a special philosopher sarcophagus like this could even be raised into the timeless sphere of great philosophers of the past. This applies not only to the seated gentleman. For instance, if the standing male figure in the middle is not Aristotle, he could be a contemporary portrait and a timeless ideal at once.

Rodenwaldt suggested too that one of the two ladies on each side of the central figure could be Empress Salonina, the wife of Emperor Gallienus; a hypothesis supported by Heinz Kähler, Erika Simon and Jörgen Bracker.[526] Both ladies, particularly the lady on the seated man's right (ill. 6a), bear some resemblance to the medallion portrait of Salonina from 254-55 CE (ill. 5). During her reign, however, empress portraits in coinage happened to be rather ambiguous as to typology. Different portraits and series of replicas of

526. Cf. Rodenwaldt (1923) 122, Rodenwaldt (1936) 104, Kähler (1962) 184, Simon (1970) 211, Bracker (1975) 775.

the imperial couple emerged in different places in the empire due to a partly collapsing power infrastructure. The features of some coin portraits of Salonina are quite dissimilar to any of the ladies from the sarcophagus.[527]

If one of the ladies is supposed to be Salonina, it will be difficult to explain the role of the other lady, who has a similar standing on the sarcophagus – unless she is Gemina, Plotinus' landlady, who, as we have seen, might have been another former empress, i.e. the widow of Emperor Trebonian Gallus.[528] Unfortunately, we do not have a portrait of Trebonian's empress for comparison. Together with her husband, Empress Salonina probably participated in Plotinus' classes at least once (cf. *VP* 12.1-2). Presumably, Gemina was a far steadier participant, together with her daughter of the same name (*VP* 9.1-3), Gemina, i.e. "twin".

Irrespective of whether Gemina the mother was the former empress, the common name of mother and daughter is intriguing. The daughter, at least, is not very likely the twin of any other in the same way as her mother might have been. The plausibility decreases exponentially, but irrespectively of this, under no circumstances does it make any sense to give "identical" twins the same name, as it would make it practically impossible to discern the one from the other in ordinary language. Instead, as it is still the practice in some places around the world today, it was a well-established Roman naming custom to give a child the same name as the parent, notably the name of the father to the son, and simply to distinguish them by the epithets *Senior* and *Junior*. Their shared name "Gemina" remains intriguing after all. We might suspect that both of them were "twins" in the astronomical rather than the biological sense and that they were called after the constellation of the Apollonian twins Castor and Pollux. If so, the family must have been influenced by astrological modes of thought, which, ironically, were also an interest of Plotinus, being a strong critic of astrology (*VP* 15.21-26) and taking twins as a testing case.[529] The reference of the name "Gemina" to the Dioscuri could also, or might rather, indicate strong family ties to the equestrian order, for which the Dioscuri were tutelary deities.

The two ladies standing close to the inspired philosopher on each of his sides are probably represented in the guise of two out of the nine sanctifying Muses, both of them meant to be inspirations for the great man in the

527. Cf., e.g., Bergmann (1977) coin plate 1.12.
528. Cf. chapter 'III.A. Coming to imperial Rome' above.
529. Cf. note 30 above.

Ill. 6b. Lady on the seated gentleman's right. (Photo: Vatican Museums XXX.10.4)

middle.[530] This circumstance would explain a great deal of the ladies' similarity to one another, though not all of it.

From a distance, they look quite similar physiognomically, so they could easily be Gemina the elder and her daughter Gemina much rather than former Empress Gemina and former Empress Salonina, who came from separate families. For a most recent empress like Salonina it would be unbecoming to appear typified into near anonymity as a Muse without any further, strong, particular reason for doing so. An older, former empress heavily engaged in both astrology and philosophy had a more plausible reason to appear that way.

530. Cf. Marrou (1938) 197-207, Cumont (1942) 253-350: 268, Wegner (1966) 47, Simon (1970) 212 and Ewald (1999) 168. The identification of the ladies as Muses has been doubted by Fittschen (1972) 487-88, whereas Koch & Sichtermann (1982) 204-05 consequently go the whole length by altogether denying that Muses appear on the sarcophagus. In this case, however, denial is no better founded than affirmation. Cf. section 'III.C.2. Emperor Gallienus in the chair?' below.

Ill. 7. Lady on the seated gentleman's left. (Photo: Vatican Museums XXX.10.5)

As the two women also look very similar to each other in age, this similarity could be meant to underscore the twin aspect of mother and daughter. They have the same haircut and are dressed and half-veiled in a similar fashion. Both of them seem to be around thirty years old, the approximate prime for women (cf. *Republic* 460e). In this, we simply discover that co-eternity is not an exclusive privilege for male philosophers. The men and women shown on the sarcophagus could all be in their prime as all living in Platonic Stillness (*stasis*, cf. III.7.11.45-56) on the Isles of the Blest. The artist could simply have rejuvenated the gathering in total, just as Socrates was said to be made young and handsome in Plato's writings (*Second Letter* 314c).

Among other details, the gender difference of the figures is set off by the difference between the rough hands of the men, presenting even Socrates as a fit man with muscles and knuckles,[531] and the soft, chubby hands of the ladies.

531. Cf. Ewald (1999) 203 on a fragment of a contemporary, muscular philosopher, now in the Roman National Museum of the Thermae.

As Bernard Andreae has pointed out,[532] the woman on the left of the seated philosopher puts the dress to her chin with her right hand in quite a sensual way (ill. 7). Her devoted and, at the same time, relaxed stance, leaning toward the veritable throne of the philosopher (cf. the throne of the One in V.5.3.4-6, VI.7.17.34-36, VI.8.7.6-7, VI.5.9.41-44, IV.8.6.10, into which each one of us can become seated, V.1.11.13-15) with her right arm gracefully resting on his chair-arm, is not too virginal an attitude either. Her left hand underpins the almost phallic book scroll of the philosopher. The drapery is exceptionally bound into a knot hanging just between the heads of the seated philosopher and the woman on his left, as if they were particularly, i.e. emotionally, tied to one another.

If the seated philosopher is Plotinus, she could be Gemina the elder,[533] as, by a closer look, her ample bosom, stomach and hips are also considerably more womanly than the corresponding parts belonging to the other depicted lady, whose appearance is almost mannish and whose attention to the philosopher, in contrast, is solely mental (ill. 6a & ill. 6b). A frontal look of both of them unveils some further differences, as the face of the lady on the seated philosopher's left is more slender to the effect that the bridge of her nose appears relatively longer (ill. 7). Her eyes are protuberant, and the angle of her brows is full of sensitive attachment in contrast to the calm horizontal brows of the broad-faced lady on his more distant right (ill. 6b).

If the two ladies were meant to represent the two Empresses Salonina and Gemina, irrespective of whether the representation originates at a time before or after Plotinus' passing away (270 CE), it would be unbecoming to depict Salonina showing that much devotion to a man who was not her husband, regardless of whether she was then a ruling empress or at the time had been killed together with her husband (268 CE). Empress Salonina was commonly known to be very faithful to Gallienus, always accompanying him on various military campaigns as well.[534] As a widow, Gemina – who, if she was the former Empress Gemina, had indeed been widowed many years earlier (253 CE) – would rather serve as the philosopher's merry escort (ill. 7). Salonina would then rather be placed on the philosopher's right hand (ill. 6a & ill. 6b). However, a twin depiction of two, presumably both former empresses at the time of the carving, is after all less likely than a twin depiction of two of Plotinus' openly acknowledged primary female pupils, both of whom certainly were called "twins".

532. Cf. Andreae (1963) 730.
533. Cf. subsection 'III.B.9.a. Gender, sex and love' above.
534. Cf. Johannes Zonaras *Abridgment of History* XII.25.

As noted above, there was a serious Neoplatonic background to treating women as philosophers on an equal basis with men.[535] For instance, Plato was said to have two women among his disciples (Diogenes Laertius III.46). Also, although Socrates only read or heard books read (cf. *Phaedo* 97b-98b) and did not write any himself, all the figures on the sarcophagus except the man standing on the seated man's right but including the ladies, either carry or hold book scrolls. A bundle of books and a further book box are placed on the pedestal. It is an additional indication that all depicted persons, men and women alike, should be considered philosophers.

How is it that the two Geminas would be presented as philosophers, while Porphyry, for instance, is not? One explanation is that, although the past in a Platonic perspective had reckoned the half-mythological figure of Diotima and the historical figure of Aspasia as philosophers, no female philosophers comparable to Socrates, Plato or Aristotle had really appeared yet. There must have been a definite personal reason as to why exactly these women, who are after all – despite the common twin aspect – clearly particularised, are presented in high relief on the sarcophagus. This argument could support the view that the man next to the seated "Plotinus", in between the ladies, also has a personal relationship to him, i.e. an argument for the view that this would be Amelius rather than Aristotle. His head is put in a position on the seated man's right symmetrically corresponding to the "emotional knot" between the seated man and the lady on his left. Unlike that lady, however, the standing philosopher on the seated man's right has no direct physical contact with him, and, in contrast to the high relief of both women, he is presented in the same lower relief as the two philosophers on the flanks. According to this counter-argument, then, the weighty philosopher Aristotle rather than a minor mind such as Amelius seems after all to be put here to balance the masterminds of Socrates and Plato on either side.

Rodenwaldt, Andreae and Simon have drawn attention to the relics of a sarcophagus back (ill. 8a) that is physically connected to the relics of a particular sarcophagus end (ill. 8b) showing philosophers in the same style and therefore possibly belonging to the same sarcophagus.[536] It is now in the Gregorian Profane Museum of the Vatican as well, near the "Plotinus sarcophagus" (so seen

535. Cf. subsection 'III.B.9.a. Gender, sex and love'.

536. Cf. Rodenwaldt (1936) 103 n. 2, Andreae (1963) 730 and Simon (1970) 214-15. Rodenwaldt says that the hypothesis still needs investigation, while Andreae and Simon take the connection for granted.

Ill. 8a. Possible back, end and lid. Gregorian Profane Museum, Vatican. (Photo: Sansaini, German Archaeological Institute 32.315)

in the background of ill. 8a). As it is, the fragment is just 1.25 metres tall but the reconstructed height of the sarcophagus was presumably twenty-five to thirty centimetres taller,[537] i.e. around the height of the front fragment of the "Plotinus sarcophagus". Klaus Fittschen has argued that despite the suggestive observations of Andreae and Simon, the fragments cannot fit together, as the edges of the front piece show no trace of the rounding that is the hallmark of the fragment from the end. According to Fittschen, the "Plotinus sarcophagus" must have been rectangular.[538] However, his argument does not appear to be completely conclusive, as it is still possible to have a linear front with the rest of the sarcophagus slightly bent all around. Not to leave something that might be significant out of consideration, I have therefore chosen to include the fragment in my interpretation.

Also, Fittschen in fact supports Andreae's argument that there is stylistic kinship between the male philosophers on both fragments, supported by the

537. Cf. Gütschow (1938) 123.
538. Cf. Fittschen (1972) 492.

Ill. 8b. Possible end. (Photo: Sansaini, German Archaeological Institute 32.378)

circumstance that the relief gets approximately as high as the front relief exactly on the rounding of the end fragment, where the philosophers are situated. Andreae conjectures that the two philosophers on each flank of the front of the "Plotinus sarcophagus" call for silence among a gathering of more or less attentive listeners that extended on probably both sarcophagus ends, on both sides of the central group.[539] This scene would seem to reflect what Porphyry tells us about the gatherings in Plotinus' school that, in principle, anyone was free to show up at the public lessons and to raise questions in the middle of the lecture (*VP* 1.13-14). Accordingly, there was a lot of babbling surrounding Plotinus' lectures – at least until Porphyry showed up in town (cf. *VP* 3.35-38, 18.1-10). On the front of the sarcophagus, the primary predecessors to any Neoplatonic philosopher, Socrates and Plato, are then guarding the central gathering on the flanks. They show a remarkable respect for the significance of the central, seated philosopher's teaching, as the Socrates figure even points in his direction.

539. Cf. Andreae (1963) 730.

Indeed, Fittschen argues that the fact that the end and back fragment was found in the Praetextatus catacomb on the Via Appia south east of Rome, 2.2 kilometres outside of Saint Sebastian's Gate, precludes any connection with the front of the "Plotinus sarcophagus".[540] However, this argument against Andreae is not conclusive either, for, whereas the end and back fragment surely could not always have been in the Vatican, the front fragment could well have been brought there at some point in time also, and certainly the possibility remains that both fragments were originally carved out from the same place and the same sarcophagus.[541]

The fragment of a covering lid measuring thirty-eight centimetres long and twenty-five centimetres high displays remnants of birds and the legs of a standing cupid (ill. 8a) as well as a quite similar edging as the back and end fragment, which suggests that the lid probably belongs to the same sarcophagus as the back and end fragment. (This edging is notably absent from the front of the "Plotinus sarcophagus".) Correspondingly, the original lid must have been no less than fifty centimetres tall,[542] making the height of the sarcophagus around two metres in total. The figures may perhaps symbolise parts of the soul leaving the body under the best augural auspices. However, the very small fragment can only leave us guessing as to what the whole lid was like, and it gives us no independent indication as to whom the sarcophagus was built to commemorate.

By contrast, apparently, the back shows a lion hunt. It is carved in a lower relief and with less detail than the philosophers of the sarcophagus end, not to mention the front of the "Plotinus sarcophagus". As lions were generally considered symbols of royal characters in ancient times as well, in both Rome and Mesopotamia, the lion hunt could also indicate that it contained a ruler of some kind, a "king of kings" (cf. V.5.3.20), even Emperor Gallienus perhaps. In so far as the lion has a philosophical significance within Platonism, it is as a symbol of courageous temper (*Republic* 588d-590b). However, the subject of a lion hunt on a sarcophagus is not uncommon. In Roman art, a lion hunt just signifies some indisputable quality of *virtus*, i.e. virtuous power. Though the emperor, Emperor Gallienus for instance, was supposed to possess a surplus of *virtus* (on a coin, he appeared personalised as such),[543] he did not enjoy a monopoly on it.

540. Still Fittschen (1972) 492. Gütschow (1938) 121 informs us that the fragment once was in the Praetextatus catacomb.
541. On the possibility of this, cf. section 'III.C.2. Emperor Gallienus in the chair?' below.
542. Cf. Gütschow (1938) 123, Andreae (1963) 730-31.
543. Cf. Alföldi (1928) 48 with the corresponding plate.

A ruler would not be expected to forgo the use of far stronger symbols of power on such a large sarcophagus as this, the very existence of which could only have been warranted by considerable power and prestige. On this sarcophagus, however, political power seems to be considered secondary to philosophical power. Expressed in a medieval metaphor, the pen – and the spirit beyond, inspiring the pen – has become mightier than the sword. As we have seen already, Plotinus in many ways had such a view of his own role (e.g., V.8.7.33-35, IV.8.2.19-24, IV.8.4.7-21), but did sufficiently wealthy persons share his view so as to dedicate a veritable sepulchral monument to him and his philosophy?

We do not know for certain. He had warned against such monuments (I.4.7.29-31), but he also declined having any pictures drawn of him, albeit without preventing a picture of high resemblance being drawn by the painter Carterius, conceived by Plotinus' chief pupil Amelius and with the explicit approval of his other important pupil Porphyry (*VP* 1). A depiction on a sarcophagus could easily have been modeled by another artist on the sketch done by Carterius. Amelius was the one who asked the Apollonian oracle about the destiny of Plotinus in the hereafter (*VP* 22.8-10) and perhaps he was also the leading figure at a later time when, corresponding to Rodenwaldt's suggestion,[544] the surviving friends eventually would have raised the money for a sepulchral monument.

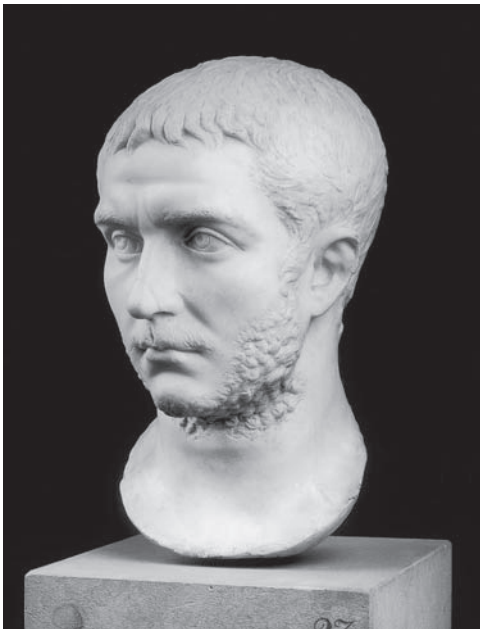
Porphyry does not mention any monument made in honour of Plotinus, and this is perhaps the strongest argument against its existence.[545] Strictly, however, from the simple argument of silence, we cannot validly infer that it was never made. Porphyry may have suppressed mentioning its existence, if he had not been involved in procuring it and since at the same time he was defending his position as the most important pupil of Plotinus and as the main editor of his writings. Thus, we cannot be completely certain whether the central figure represents Plotinus or not.

Another option is that it represents a pupil of Plotinus rather than Plotinus himself. For instance, as a number of scholars have pointed out, the figure does not wear the usual humble attire of philosophers but instead the tunic and toga of a wealthy Roman citizen or official,[546] whereas, as Fittschen observes, his

544. Cf. Rodenwaldt (1923) 122.

545. Cf. von Heintze (1963b) 52-53, despite her already being partly answered by Rodenwaldt (1923) 122.

546. Cf. Himmelmann-Wildschütz (1962) 123 n. 74, Simon (1970) 210, Fittschen (1972) 491.



▲ *Ill. 9. Emperor Gallienus, ca. 260 CE. Ancient Collection, National Museums, Berlin. (Photo: Jürgen Liepe)*

▲ *Ill. 10. Emperor Gallienus. Milanese silver medallion, 260-62 CE. Sforzesco Castle, Milan. (Photo: Professor Marianne Bergmann, Gottingen University)*

shoes indicate affiliations with either the equestrian or even the lower, third order.[547] The argument does not conclusively exclude Plotinus as the model, since, as we have seen above,[548] Plotinus was probably quite wealthy. Nor can we strictly exclude the possibility that he was a Roman citizen or that his family was equestrian, and certainly not the possibility that his family belonged to a wealthy subsection of the wider third order. The concurrent unlikelihood of the possibilities of the central figure representing Plotinus, however, suggests that we pursue an interpretation along other lines.

Hans Peter L'Orange, for instance, assumed that the portrait style of the central, seated man (ill. 1) is to be dated in the early days of Gallienus' sole reign (cf. ill. 9 & ill. 10). This circumstance would make it unlikely that the sarcophagus was the entombment of Plotinus, as he died ten years after Gallienus' accession as a sole emperor. L'Orange correspondingly rejected Rodenwaldt's

547. Cf. Fittschen (1972) 491 and note 556 below.
548. Cf. chapter 'III.A. Coming to imperial Rome'.

proposal that Plotinus is the depicted philosopher in the centre but thought it more likely that the figure is an important friend of philosophy, and, due to the suggestive scene depicted, consequently a friend of Plotinus.[549] According to Plato's *Phaedo* (67d-68b), the thought of which is referred to by Plotinus (e.g., I.1.3.17-26), philosophy is about eternity and separating from temporal, bodily disturbances, because the body in a sense is the speaking entombment of the soul (cf., e.g., *Cratylus* 400b-c). Maybe one of Plotinus' honourable or wealthy friends also wished to obtain eternity after death through the means of philosophy symbolised on this sarcophagus.

A minor dignitary like Peregrinus could apparently pay for his own and his wife's sarcophagus,[550] but it seems that the dimensions and the artwork of the "Plotinus sarcophagus" would entail greater expense. Plotinus' pupils presumably included more wealthy dignitaries, as, for instance, the senators Rogatianus,[551] Castricius Firmus and, especially, Sabinillus and Marcellus Orrontius, who are explicitly said to have been working quite hard on philosophical studies (*VP* 7.29-31). The possibility of a dignitary of even higher rank than these is open as well. Emperor Gallienus was in fact a pupil of Plotinus (cf. *VP* 12).

III.C.2. Emperor Gallienus in the chair?

So, next, let us suppose that the figure represents Emperor Gallienus. This hypothesis was suggested by Kähler and was subsequently supported by Andreae, Simon and Bracker.[552] We can add some additional details.

Although a decisive part of the senate was implicated in the assassination of Gallienus, the senate in fact proclaimed him divine after his death as tradition prescribed for good emperors. This was due to pressure from the new emperor and Commander-in-Chief Claudius II, to whom military authority had been transferred right before Gallienus' death and who, by his own accession, naturally had become a defender of the interests of emperors.[553] In

549. Cf. L'Orange (1951) 28, 29 with n. 2, 30.
550. Cf. Fittschen (1972) 493.
551. Cf. Himmelmann-Wildschütz (1962) 123.
552. Cf. Kähler (1962) 184-85, Andreae (1969) 234-35, Simon (1970) 210-15, Bracker (1975) 771-73.
553. Cf. Aurelius Victor *On the Emperors* XXXIII.27.

turn, Claudius was also under pressure from his soldiers, for Gallienus had been highly regarded as a general. Following the assassination, they were heavily bribed to calm down.[554] To comfort Gallienus' supporters, Claudius was forced to make him a sepulchral monument (*sepulcro*) nine Roman miles (i.e. thirteen kilometres) on the Via Appia according to the anonymous and taciturn but generally quite reliable senatorial *Extracts about the Emperors* (XL.3). Gallienus could have been portrayed on a sarcophagus like the "Plotinus sarcophagus", which would consequently be the "Gallienus sarcophagus". If this hypothesis is correct, the sarcophagus fragment has at one point in time been transported the short distance back to the city of Rome, perhaps by curators from the Curia itself. For an indefinite time, it was kept in the Borgia apartments, whereas the exact place and time of the finding of the sarcophagus fragment remains unknown today, except that it probably was carved out from somewhere either in or not too far from Rome. If the mentioned back and end fragment belongs to the same sarcophagus, an auxiliary hypothesis would of course be needed in order to account for the up to eleven kilometres distance between the sepulchral monument of Gallienus and the Praetextatus catacomb, where the back and end fragment was found. The two fragments could also well belong to distinct sarcophagi.

It is correct that sarcophagi for non-Christian emperors are rarely found, as they were supposed to preserve tradition and were given a funeral pyre and a subsequent cinerary urn. However, considering the philhellenism of Gallienus, we should expect that his funeral customs, no less than those of Emperor Balbinus (238 CE) and the son of Emperor Decius (249-51 CE), Emperor Hostilian (who died in 252 CE, and is probably shown mounted as the eagle eye on the upper, central horse of the "Ludovisi battle sarcophagus"), conformed to the vogue of sarcophagi imported from Greece.

On Gallienus, the senatorial author of the *Augustan History* writes in *The two Gallieni* (XVI.4 & 6):

> Often, he appeared with a halo crown. In Rome, where emperors always are seen wearing the toga, he displayed himself in a purple robe with golden and jewelled buckles. He wore a male tunic of purple fabric shot with gold and provided with sleeves. He used a jewelled belt. On his boot (*campagos*) straps (<*corr*>*igias*) he put precious gems, referring to them as hunting nets. […] He spoiled the people with alms. He made a donation to the senate without rising

554. Cf. *Augustan History*, *The two Gallieni* XV.

from his seat. He called married women into his council and as they kissed his hand, he gave each of them four pieces of gold struck with his name.

The central male figure of the sarcophagus does not wear the royal robe but just the traditional toga of a Roman citizen on top of a tunic with slightly feminine longer sleeves but without any signs of gold or jewels anywhere. These, after all, fairly humble traits neither confirm nor exclude Gallienus as the model.[555] For instance, the quotation above does not say that the splendour of Gallienus meant that he always wore the purple robe and jewellery or that he was presented in art as doing so.

The shoes (*calcei*) of the figure have been considered evidence of his belonging to the equestrian order. This circumstance is supposed to exclude Gallienus as a candidate, since he belonged to the senator class and, as the quotation above illustrates, as a minimum, used to wear the appropriate footwear.[556] However, one could also reverse the argument and suppose that Gallienus here was paid an extraordinary tribute for his military gifts and deeds and, especially, for his intended reform giving the equestrian class priority of military command.[557] We should not forget that Gallienus' successor, Claudius, as probable commander of the Gallienic cavalry, had been second in command.[558] Ironically, in a sense his accession confirmed Gallienus' prescript.

A key argument for Emperor Gallienus as the central male figure is the no less than imperial scale of the sarcophagus. On the front and without the lid, it is 1.47 metres in height and, without reconstructions of the missing parts, 2.20 metres long. An estimate of its original length with eight rather than, as it is seen now, with just six figures depicted on the front,[559] is 2.90 metres. The only sarcophagus of the third century that we know for certain to have been dedicated to a deceased emperor, namely the "marriage sarcophagus" of Emperor Balbinus and his empress from the Praetextatus catacomb, is only 1.17 metres in height without the lid and 2.32 metres long. An explanation of its minor scale could be that Balbinus only ruled for three months, whereas Gallienus ruled for fifteen years and for eight of these as sole regent. However, for the imperial family, the sizes of sepulchral monuments did not

555. Cf. Alföldi (1935) 10 with n. 5.
556. Cf. Fittschen (1972) 491-92, Goette (1988) 451, 459, Zanker (1995) 279.
557. Cf. Aurelius Victor *On the Emperors* XXXIII.33-34 and chapter 'III.A. Coming to imperial Rome' above.
558. Cf. Alföldi (1939) 216-17.
559. Cf. below in this section with note 589.

always correspond to the relative importance of offices attained. The "Ludovisi sarcophagus" that was probably made for Emperor Hostilian, who only succeeded in becoming a co-emperor and for quite a short while, is around the same size as the "Plotinus sarcophagus", being 1.54 metres in height without the lid and 2.74 metres long.

The scale of the "Acilia sarcophagus" is also similar to the "Plotinus sarcophagus", standing 1.49 metres high without the lid and, in its reconstructed condition, ca. 2.50 metres long. Because of its dimensions and its portraits, this sarcophagus has been thought to be imperial as well. It has been suggested that it may be a family sarcophagus for Gordian III and his parents. However, certain indications, notably the style and in particular the chevelure of the figures, suggest that it was probably created quite close in time to the production of the "Plotinus sarcophagus" and even by the same workshop, all of which has encouraged the search for other hypotheses. It has been suggested that the figures represent Emperor Carinus (282-85 CE) with his empress and predeceased son, although this identification is also quite dubious, based on arguments relating, among other things, to the usual length of Carinus' beard.[560]

The size of these sarcophagi nevertheless remains an argument for searching for their background among the leading circles of Roman society. The argument is by no means weaker for the "Plotinus sarcophagus", considering its dimensions.[561] The hypothesis of whether a monarchical self-presentation here could have been taken over from imperial art by a wealthy citizen seems to be secondary to the circumstance that this is essentially an imperial presentation.[562] In comparison, the coeval "brother sarcophagus" with a similarly strong, philosophical theme presenting the virtuous life of a by all means high-ranking official, who might have been a Gallienic consul,[563] is (without reconstructions) only 1.17 metres in height and 2.55 metres long. Only the office of emperor would rank higher than the office of consul.

According to various sources and implied by the quotation on Gallienus from the *Augustan History* above, during the first centuries CE the throne

560. Cf. Fittschen (1979) 584-85, who criticises both suggestions, of which the former was endorsed by, e.g., Kähler (1962) 182-89 and the latter was put forward by von Heintze (1959).
561. Cf. Ewald (1999) 169: "[…] der 'Plotin-Sarkophag' muß einst zu den größten von Sarkophagen überhaupt gezählt haben."
562. As distinct from Fittschen (1972) 491-92 and Ewald (1999) 39.
563. Cf. the interpretation of Himmelmann-Wildschütz (1962).

(*solium*) was step by step becoming one of the emperor's official symbols of power.[564] The central male figure of the "Plotinus sarcophagus" is seated in an armchair as on a throne. The armchair is placed on a raised platform, automatically elevating the head of the seated man to the level of the heads of those standing around him. The distant look and the frontal, stiff upper lip of the enthroned person demands adoration from the surroundings and a commanding relation to any spectator. Although there are traces of a motif of a frontally seated man with a book scroll dated at least forty years earlier on,[565] and in one case, on a sarcophagus now at the Louvre Museum in Paris, depicting also a woman looking like a Muse standing by his side,[566] this is the first known example of a peculiarly serious, monumental approach. In addition to the simple motif of a seated or enthroned gentleman, the seated figure appears to function as an iconographic prototype for later depictions of emperors and other rulers among their courtiers, as in, for instance, Byzantine depictions of Christ the Almighty among His holy men and women.[567]

The coeval, east Roman "Sidamara sarcophagus" (now at the Archaeological Museums in Istanbul), the total iconography of which bears the closest resemblance to the iconography of the "Plotinus sarcophagus" of all sarcophagi handed down to us, indeed also has the central, reading figure sitting on a chair on a raised platform. The whole attitude of the central, seated man, however, is turned to his left and his attention is exclusively directed to his book. In addition, his chair is no armchair and neither is the chair of the central, philosophical figure of the "Peregrinus sarcophagus", nor does he sit on a raised platform. The status of the seated man of the "Plotinus sarcophagus" is higher.

Noting a striking physiognomic resemblance of the central, seated figure of the sarcophagus to Gallienus, Simon and Bracker both support Kähler's interpretation.[568] According to Gallienus' portrait in sculpture (cf. ill. 9) and most of the coins and medallions struck with his portrait (cf. ill. 10), he had a beard under the chin that was quite similar to the beard of the seated

564. Cf. Alföldi (1935) 124-39 with plates 14 & 16.
565. Cf. Rodenwaldt (1936) 98 n. 2, 105, Ewald (1999) 38.
566. Cf. Himmelmann-Wildschütz (1962) 122-23 with n. 70.
567. Cf. Rodenwaldt (1936) 105, Mathew (1943) 68, Himmelmann-Wildschütz (1962) 123, Pelikán (1965) 111-12, 134-35, Simon (1970) 210, 214, Zanker (1995) 277, 279, 284.
568. Cf. Simon (1970) 210-11, Bracker (1975) 771-73. Bracker's hypothesis is that the sarcophagus was Gallienus' family sarcophagus and that the occasion for which it was made was the death of Gallienus' older son in 258 CE.

man of the "Plotinus sarcophagus" (ill. 1).[569] Presumably, Gallienus grew his beard to appear as philhellenic and philosophical as Emperor Hadrian. In fact, according to the length of beards, the seated man should be considered the least philosophical of the male figures. This would conform rather well to the hypothesis that the figure represents Emperor Gallienus rather than Plotinus the philosopher. The hair and beard style of the early Gallienus as attested in numerous portraits could rightly be considered a balance between the associations of a philosophical attitude and the military efficiency of, e.g., Alexander the Great or the young Augustus.[570] The typical beard of Gallienus is a tight neck and chin beard, which is quite different from the full beards of, e.g., Emperor Probus (276-82 CE) or Emperor Carinus, even though their beards are relatively tight as well.[571] On the other hand, to say that the similarities between Gallienus and the seated male of the sarcophagus are striking is undoubtedly an over-statement. The seated male figure does not correspond to Emperor Gallienus' official appearance at the time of death in 268 CE.[572] Out of two or three main Gallienus types the chevelure and whole appearance of the seated figure could perhaps correspond to Gallienus' portrait type I (ill. 9), i.e. an early portrait version of Gallienus around or before 262 CE (cf. ill. 10),[573] at a time when his beard, his hair and his head in total had not yet grown powerfully coarse as these parts apparently did according to later, perhaps more realistic representations that probably served another offshoot of his and his supporters' political goals.[574]

569. Cf. Rodenwaldt (1923) 122.
570. Portraits of Alexander are mentioned by Alföldi (1935) 148 as a model for the medallion of ill. 10 showing Gallienus as the first emperor known to be crowned with the royal diadem, whereas Hannestad (1976) 265 and Hannestad (1986) 296 – in line with the conjectures of Alföldi (1928) 52-54 and Mathew (1943) 68 – draw attention to portraits of Augustus as a model for the marble head of ill. 9.
571. As distinct from Fittschen (1979) 588.
572. Cf. L'Orange (1951) 29 n. 2.
573. Cf. Bergmann (1977) 51-52 with plates 12-14, whereas Bergmann ibid. 49-50 refers to writings of Fittschen that raise doubts as to whether apparently different Gallienus types in sculpture correspond to different times as represented in coinage. Partial collapse of the imperial administration would have given licence to simultaneous typological variation. Cf. (next) note 574 below.
574. As distinct from Fittschen (1979) 586-88, I prefer comparisons with the replica of type I in Berlin (ill. 9) to the replica with more chubby cheeks at the Braschi Palace in Rome as I certainly agree with Fittschen (1979) 589 that the latter, together with portraits of Gallienus of types II and III, show decreasing similarity to the seated male figure of the sarcophagus. Cf. (previous) note 573 above.

Could the physiognomy of the seated figure be Gallienic, while the style of presentation could be the same as that of Probus and Carinus? In principle, there is no obstacle to either Plotinus or Gallienus being the model in the circumstance that the style of other or perhaps all the rest of the elements of the sarcophagus together could be a style occurring in acknowledged imperial art later than 270 CE. The general picture of the history of Roman styles as a *historia rerum gestarum* is constructed from the list of emperors, whereas the history of styles as a *res gestae* must actually have been made up of many particular instances of innovation that for the most part were carried out by great artists. (Regarding the creation of art, Plotinus was a nominalist too, cf. I.6.3.6-15, III.8.2.6-15, III.8.4.36-43, V.8.1.6-40, V.9.11.1-6, V.9.14.18-19.) Even conditioned as these masters were by various political objectives of their employers, the range of stylistic choice of their own was still rather wide. In the third century CE, this circumstance is becoming increasingly overt. Whereas production of public sculpture often failed because of lack of funding during the occasional political crises, production of private sculpture continued, and in the city of Rome workshops for sarcophagi therefore tended to become laboratories for new styles. Some of them subsequently became manifest in emperor portraits.

The unostentatious and rather crude style of the portraits of, e.g., Emperor Probus or Emperor Carinus, therefore, does not need to have been a pre-existing pattern for the style of the portrait of the seated male from the sarcophagus. A reverse causal nexus or simple temporal succession is also possible. Moreover, the style of the sarcophagus is not exactly crude, except perhaps for the face of the seated male figure; the fashion of the face represents rather an intermediate stage between the Neo-Augustan style of the elegant marble head of Gallienus from around 260 CE (ill. 9) and, for instance, the haggard look of the standard portrait of Emperor Probus. The style of the sarcophagus, then, suggests a dating around 270 CE or perhaps some years earlier. It is not necessarily a product of post-Gallienic times.[575] For instance, Fittschen identifies the coiffure of the lady standing to the seated man's left as being the same as the coiffure of Empress Severina (274 CE).[576] However, a combination of a topknot and a forward-pointing back lock already occurs as part of the coiffure of the empress of Gordian III, Tranquillina, and the same combina-

575. As distinct from Fittschen (1972) 491, 503, Bergmann (1977) 130 and Fittschen (1979) 588.

576. Cf. Fittschen (1972) 491.

tion is definitely seen in the hairstyle of Empress Salonina (cf. ill. 5).[577] The topknot of the ladies of the sarcophagus has not been carried through as far as the forehead as is the case on the coin portraits of Severina.[578]

Generally, without really speaking of mass production, the workshops made series of sarcophagi while leaving the design of their main particular portraits to the wishes of the eventual purchasers. However, it is not certain at all that this general rule also applies in this instance and that the centrally seated man should be the making of another, "freer" hand than the rest of the sarcophagus. Of the remaining six figures on the front, at least the three outstanding core figures, i.e. the seated man and the ladies, are all portraits in high relief. The complete sarcophagus must consequently have been conceived at the same time and, probably, essentially all made by the same hand. It should not be surprising that the chevelure of men and women is not identical, or that the chevelure of the central portrait is different from the chevelure of the ideal types of philosophers in the background. Nevertheless, the style and making of the eyes and brows seem identical all around.[579]

If the central figure were Gallienus, why would he be rejuvenated? An option is still that his age was deliberately aligned with the ages of the surrounding philosophers, as Gallienus was in his forty-ninth year in 268 CE when he died, whereas the portrait of ill. 9 presents him in his prime. The style used to present Gallienus as the central man of the sarcophagus (ill. 1) would then be a deliberate, and perhaps philosophically inspired, breakaway from the influential trend of Roman verism. If this is a representation of Gallienus, he was presented approximately as he looked in what now would have appeared as his golden years between his accession as a sole emperor in 260 CE and his ten-year anniversary as emperor in 263 CE. That period had seen the origins of the style labelled "Gallienic renaissance".

Almost everything said in the section above about the surrounding three male philosophical figures also applies if the seated man is not Plotinus but rather Gallienus. According to Andreae and Simon's interpretation, Gallienus aspired to be a philosopher and statesman at the same time. At any rate, he seriously tried to appear as a philhellenic bel esprit like the great Emperor Hadrian.[580] To engage in philosophy was probably considered the most phil-

577. Cf. Bergmann (1977) 90 with coin plate 1.3-5.
578. Cf. Rodenwaldt (1936) 104, Bergmann (1977) coin plate 5.1-6.
579. As distinct from Rodenwaldt (1936) 104, despite Himmelmann-Wildschütz' additional argument concerning the male philosopher figure outside the core setting on the seated man's left flank, referred in note 520 above.
580. Cf., e.g., section 'III.B.8. Homeland and empire' above.

hellenic thing to do. The central male figure of the sarcophagus frowns and wrinkles his forehead in deep thoughts, and so does Gallienus on the portrait from around the time of his accession of 260 CE (ill. 9).

However, if the seated male is Gallienus, there will be one exception as regards the philosopher on his immediate right. Of the three identifications of the philosophers in the background, this one was the least certain. If the seated man is Gallienus, the central standing philosopher does not have to be Aristotle. Instead, he could be the philosopher Plotinus, whispering some good advice to the statesman. Again, we must remember that if so, Plotinus has been rejuvenated as have, presumably, all the persons depicted. Just as much as Socrates on the one flank, all the male philosophers in the background are made into ideal types as mainly belonging to the timeless sphere. However, if one or both of the others were in fact contemporary with the deceased and were here presented working as his private "house philosophers",[581] an educated and utterly wealthy citizen like Gallienus would be the first person one would suspect of having chosen such an iconography for his sepulchral monument, had he expressed his wishes.

Accordingly, the roles of the women in the foreground will also change somewhat. The women could well have predeceased the man but not necessarily. Their veils are signs of their matrimonial status, whether they were both married to the seated man or not.[582] If both are considered to have been wives of the deceased, one of them could also have succeeded the other. Kähler proposed that if the seated man were Gallienus, one of the ladies would suggest herself to be his empress Salonina, whereas the other lady could be his official mistress Pipa or Pipara, the daughter of the king of the Marcomans, a Germanic tribe living on the border of Noricum, i.e. in present-day Bohemia. She had been delivered to him already in the year of his first accession as a co-emperor in 253 CE. "He desired her devastatingly (*perdite dilexit*)." During "the plague" in Rome, he is also said to have repressed its presence by giving himself to both of his wives without distinction.[583] Though coins and medallions are struck with only official empresses, sometimes by themselves and sometimes together with the emperor in perfect harmony (*concordia*), the generally tepid tone in senatorial sources regarding the erotic aspects of

581. Cf. and at the same time adding to Ewald (1999) 93-94.
582. Cf. Ewald (1999) 43, 168.
583. Cf. *Augustan History*, *The two Gallieni* XXI.3, Aurelius Victor *On the Emperors* XXXIII.6, Anonymous (senator) *Extracts about the Emperors* XXXIII.1.

the autocratic conduct of emperors in particular or our observance of recent royal protocol should not lead us to discount the possibility that both wives are represented on this ancient sarcophagus.[584]

A comparison with the iconography of the one long side of the "Sidamara sarcophagus" from earlier on in the third century but from Pamphylia, far from the city of Rome, supports a similar conclusion, if we follow its conventional interpretation. As already mentioned, it shows the deceased man as a seated philosopher reading a book scroll in the middle. He is turned in the direction of a female figure, who is presumably his wife and is presented as a Muse on his left, whereas his daughter, presumably, is dressed as the goddess Artemis behind him on his right, while the Dioscuri twins guard the flanks of the family group against disturbances from the mounted battle against wild animals on the back.[585] In comparison, on the "Plotinus sarcophagus" the Dioscuri are replaced by Socrates and the philosopher I take to be Plato, while a third philosopher is added standing in the background right next to the seated man. Instead of only one wife dressed as a Muse as on the "Sidamara sarcophagus", here, presumably, two Muses are presented and therefore, perhaps, two wives of the deceased man.

Simon does not pay much attention to the suggestion of both wives being depicted, because evidence is meagre.[586] Instead, she concentrates on the symbolic content by comparing with the "brother sarcophagus" that shows a high-ranking Gallienic official in four of his virtuous roles: in the middle as a Greek philosopher conversing with himself in the shape of a Roman senator, while we at the same time are shown him being installed in office on the one flank and obtaining marriage on the other. We might well take Simon's comparison further and consequently expect that, on the front of the "Plotinus Sarcophagus", these roles, including the role as a family man, are all fused in the figure of the seated, central man.

584. As distinct from the dark sarcasm of Fittschen (1979) 588 n. 32.

585. Cf. Pasinli (1989) 8-11.

586. Cf. Simon (1970) 211-12. Nevertheless, assuming that one of the women is Empress Salonina, she thinks that it must be the woman on the seated man's right – in whose direction he, according to Simon, is gazing. Two things qualify that statement. Firstly, the distant look of the seated man does not exactly intersect the gaze of the woman on his right. Secondly, the attitude and gestures of the buxom woman on his left suggest a far higher degree of both physical and emotional closeness to the enthroned gentleman. On the other hand, these qualities are not necessarily embodied by an official wife.

To the symbolic content, Simon adds that the female figures, in her view appearing in the roles of the Muses Clio on his right and Polyhymnia on his left, stress the importance of an active as well as a contemplative life for the seated man, the possible world ruler, in so far as Clio with her book scroll is the Muse of history and Polyhymnia could be interpreted as the Muse of philosophy,[587] i.e. as the Platonic *logos* that clarifies the Homeric *mûthos*. The lady standing to his right could therefore also be interpreted as the Muse of epic poetry, Calliope, sometimes understood as leader of the Muses.[588] Muses were generally reckoned as tutelary goddesses of philosophy, cf. *Phaedrus* (259b-d), *Sophist* (259e), *Philebus* (67b). Plotinus in particular considered the Muses as guardian spirits of a semi-eternal kind, solely adapted to act from eternity into time and history (III.7.11.6-11). He describes the making of statues of Muses (V.8.1.6-15), and asserts that one must envisage their beauty intellectually as really a part of oneself that is in general led by Apollo and his Muses so to speak, if one is to understand Beauty at all (V.8.10.38-43). According to the *Phaedrus* (245a), the *Ion* (534c) and the *Epinomis* (991b), Muses are definitely necessary for one to grasp the beauty of poetry, and perhaps on this sarcophagus, that view has been generalised for all the arts and sculptural art in particular.

There are traces of an additional figure on the flank, perhaps a third Muse, to the right of the Socrates figure. According to symmetry, a fourth Muse would then be needed to balance this Muse on the other flank next to the sundial, and this could well have been Urania.[589] If we grant this, perhaps all nine Muses have been presented around the sarcophagus. Presumably, however, they would not all have been portraits of contemporary women in the same way as the two female figures in high relief on the front. This argument could appear to lead to the opposite conclusion: that none of the other figures were Muses. However, in the same way as one or two of the philosophers depicted could have contemporary guises, while others definitely belonged to the past, two of the Muses depicted surely had contemporary guises, while others rather could belong to pure timelessness.

587. Cf. Simon (1970) 211-14, referring to Wegner (1966) 99-100.
588. Cf. Ewald (1999) 168.
589. Cf. Wegner (1966) 47, Ewald (1999) 168. The symmetrical argument of Ewald relies on technical evidence and reverses the order of Wegner.

III.C.3. The iconographic touch of Plotinianism

Although we still cannot conclude definitely for whom, i.e. for which Roman dignitary, the "Plotinus sarcophagus" was made, we should allow the inference to be made that it exhibits archaeological evidence for a profound connection between Neoplatonism and Roman social life in the last third of the third century CE. Compared to the suggestions of the seated man being either Plotinus or Gallienus, this seemingly more modest inference depends neither upon any identification of the seated man in the middle nor upon any identification of the two ladies on either side of him. The argument is rather iconographic than typological, as it only depends upon the typological identification of one philosopher as Socrates on the one flank and, symmetrically and simultaneously, another philosopher as Plato on the other flank.

The identification of Plato is the crux of the matter. Socrates frequently appears on the philosopher sarcophagi of the century, where his appearance could signify a variety of distinct philosophies or, rather, philosophy as such – quite unqualified. The unique representation of Socrates in close connection with a figure that represents Plato, however, would unequivocally reveal a Neoplatonic significance of this stylish sarcophagus. As we have noted, Neoplatonism as a framework of interpretation renders significant depth to other details of its exquisite expression. In total, such iconography on a Roman city sarcophagus would be inconceivable without the philosophical activities carried out by Plotinus in Rome. Certainly, there were other philosophers than Plotinus around in the city at the time,[590] but, in contrast to the manifold of Christians, Gnostics and other mainly religious sectarians (*VP* 16), no other philosophers of comparable worth and fame are recorded (cf. Augustine *Letter* CXVIII.33). No comparable Platonist philosopher was around in the world, if we believe the contemporary verdict of another former pupil of Ammonius Saccas from Alexandria, Longinus, who, as a former teacher of Platonism in Athens, was far from uncritical of Plotinus (*VP* 20.32-33 & 68-76). The iconography of this Roman sarcophagus draws on a Platonic philosophy of a status like the one of Plotinus. The sarcophagus is a picture of Plotinian Neoplatonism.

590. This was a main reason for Rodenwaldt (1936) 104-05 to doubt that the central figure is Plotinus.

Conclusion

Unifying with Soul, Intellect and the One, respectively, the particular human soul becomes itself in increasingly higher degrees. The One is the absolute Self as the absolutely partless, undivided and indivisible individual in contrast to everything else, which is partible, particular, divided and divisible until matter is reached at the very end of the emanation process originating in the One.

Everything is searching for absolute selfhood but only persons can attain it by obtaining complete identity with the One. This is because persons have not only Soul but also Intellect and the One within themselves. Since they become indistinguishable at the point of ultimate unification in the One, the question naturally arises as to what essentially distinguishes persons from each other. Different bodies or memories of previous bodies are not essential criteria. The potentiality or degree of actualisation of the person's particular intellect is not an essential criterion either. At the level of Intellect and below, a particular Form of the particular person is a highly essential criterion. It strongly determines everything by *in-esse* predication, including all relations of the particular soul effected by its "gaze" or general preference, and more specifically, by the distinctive intentionality of its particular intellect within universal Intellect. All relations between those particular Forms have been determined by the principle of Providence, which manages all effects of the One towards the best. The One then rigidly determines everything. For the reason that the One is a sufficient reason for itself (*ratio sui*) and no cause of itself (*causa sui*), it involves no infinite regress of self-determination. Especially in treatise VI.8, Plotinus hereby answers the problematic previously presented most succinctly in Plato's *Euthyphro*. What has become known as Leibniz' Principle of Sufficient Reason, his Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles, the corresponding Principle of the Non-Identity of Discernibles and his determinist Principle of *In-Esse* Predication were all deduced from Plotinus.

In crucial contrast to what is the case in the monadology of Leibniz, this seemingly inexorable determinism could be fundamentally disrupted and transfigured by the soul's further unification with the One, however. For while it is determined by Providence which souls are to unify with the One and when, what happens in ultimate unification with this absolute determinant cannot be predetermined. Whereas particular souls unifying with the One will have their selves replaced by the absolute Self, they will not be annihilated. So the causal nexus of absolute unification will be quite different and particular according to the particular souls affected thereby.

Providence assures that all souls having the One within will unify with the One sooner or later. The striving presented by the One within and also by decreasing degrees of unity in other beings makes determinism relatively provisional and renders the henological hierarchy quite dynamic. For human beings, it means that they are not just God's determinist puppets or slaves but will become His assistants.

Interior freedom leads to exterior freedom in the form of politics as well. Favoured by his prosperous upbringing in Egypt, his experience with the Roman military and his close connections to leading political circles in Rome, Plotinus develops a political philosophy using Platonic principles as patterns for social conduct. In a world basically at war with itself, everybody is in competition with each other. Inequalities of power and wealth are a natural outcome of the necessary differences between souls. Any counterbalancing will be secondary to this common law and order. His political philosophy stresses the urge to develop oneself, one's homeland and one's self-defence in order not to fall prey to others and in order to liberate everyone else in the universal city-state.

This leaves Plotinus with an unresolved puzzle, however: whether there is any absolute historical development towards the better or whether the relation between good and evil nevertheless always stays the same.

Archaeological evidence, especially from the so-called Plotinus sarcophagus, suggests that Plotinus' general philosophy had a direct social and political impact in his time.

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Index of passages

Alexander of Aphrodisias
On Fate
XXXII • 141
CLXXX.26-28 • 151
CLXXXII.22-24 • 178
CLXXXIX.9-11 • 178

Ammianus Marcellinus
Deeds
XXIII.5.7 & 17 • 201-02

Anaxagoras
Fragments
DK 59B1 • 54

Anaximander
Fragments
DK 12A9 • 235

Anonymous (Neopythagorean)
Theology of Arithmetic
2.16-17 • 130
3.17-18 • 130

Anonymous (Platonist)
Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy
3.15-20 • 193
4.10-11 • 200

Anonymous (senator)
Extracts about the Emperors
XXXIII.1 • 315
XL.3 • 308

Anselm
Why God Became Man
II.5 & 17-18 • 281

Apuleius
On Plato and his Doctrines
I.3.186 • 198

Aristotle
Categories
1b27 • 269
1b29 • 51
2a3 • 239
2a31-34 • 51
3a21-25 • 50
4a18-21 & 29-34 • 51, 82
6b28-30 • 269
8b26-27 • 149

Posterior Analytics
71a29-30 • 26
90a9 • 135
100a3-14 • 98
100a15-100b1 • 250

Physics
188a27-30 • 131
198b10-199b34 • 222
198b27 • 244
199b6 • 270
199b20-22 • 242
199b29-31 • 222-23
200a7 • 243
202a13-14 • 173
247b4-7 • 28
257a31-258b9 • 171, 180

On Generation and Corruption
323b10-15 • 72

On the Soul
404b16-18 • 72
407a15-22 • 95
408b11-13 • 250
412a19-21 • 36
412b8-9 • 64
413a3-10 • 36
415b12 • 135
417b5-7 • 56
417b5-28 • 28
417b19 • 28
417b22-28 • 250
418b13-17 • 65
424a17-24 • 28
425b26-426a11 • 28
425b26-426a26 • 28
429b29-430a19 • 28
430a2-5 & 19-20 • 31
430a12 • 54
430a23-25 • 25
430a24 • 54
431a1-2 • 31
431b17-23 • 31
431b23-432a1 • 28

On the Movement of Animals
700a35-700b3 • 131, 166

On the Generation of Animals
716a13-23 • 270
730a24-b32 • 270
768a10-20 • 270
769b3-773a32 • 243

Metaphysics
982a17-19 • 245
982b26 • 173
992a19-21 • 108
1003b22-34 • 55
1017b15 • 135
1021a21-25 • 19
1023b32-34 • 30, 31
1025a14-19 • 242
1031a15-28 • 33
1036a2-9 • 250
1041b26 • 135
1043a2 • 135
1043b2-4 • 33
1043b13 • 135
1045a8 & 28 • 135
1045a11 • 135
1045b4-5 & 20 • 135
1059b27-31 • 55
1065a6-11 • 49, 250
1071a20-24 • 20
1071a27-29 • 52
1071a36-b1 • 52
1071b12-20 • 63
1072a15 • 130
1072a23-1072b8 • 28
1072b3-5 • 173
1072b17 • 176
1072b28 • 61
1073a23-34 • 173

1074a37 • 63
1075a13-15 • 230
1075a24-25 • 230
1076a4 • 229 •
1078b23-34 • 51
1086b32-33 • 250
1087b33-1088a8 • 179

Nicomachean Ethics
1094a27-b7 • 228
1099b13-25 • 242
1100a6-9 • 265
1101a6-8 • 265
1103a34-1103b1 • 280
1109b1-1110a4 • 173
1111a22-24 • 173
1113a9-12 • 152
1113b7-14 • 178
1129b29-30 • 77
1139b18-24 • 250
1140b31-33 • 250
1144b4-9 • 243
1153b14-21 • 247
1153b16-19 • 166
1153b19-21 • 265
1161a16-17 • 135
1162a6-7 • 135
1165a23 • 135
1165a30-33 • 246
1177b27-31 • 275
1177b31-1178a3 • 214
1178b20-32 • 28

Politics
1253b1-1255b40 • 240
1261a15-24 • 259, 279
1278b32-37 • 267
1280a11-13 • 266
1280b39-40 • 247
1284b13-1288a32 • 216
1285a14-16 • 264
1301a28-31 • 227
1317a40-b11 • 268
1317b11-15 • 268
1326b26-32 • 246
1328b34-1329a2 • 246
1329a17-26 • 246

Arrian
Alexander's Campaign
IV.10-14 • 220

Athanasius
Volume to the Antiochian Synod
41-42 • 93

Augustine
On the Immortality of the Soul
VIII.14 • 130

On the Size of the Soul
II.3 • 93
III.4 • 93

On the Free Will
II.37.14 • 95

Confessions
VII.9.13 • 92
VIII.2.3 • 92
XI.20.26 • 92
XI.27.34-XI.30.40 • 92
XIII.11.12 • 92

On the Trinity
V.8.10-V.9.10 • 92
VII.6.12 • 92
IX.2.2 • 92

IX.4.4 • 92
IX.4.7-IX.5.8 • 92
IX.12.17 • 93
IX.12.18 • 92
X.8.11 • 93
X.11.17-18 • 92
X.12.19 • 92-93
XIV.4.6 • 93

On the Literal Meaning of Genesis
VII.2-3 • 93

On the City of God
IX.17 • 93
X.23 • 92
XIX.12 • 260

Letters
CXVIII.33 • 318

Aurelius Victor
On the Emperors
XXVII.8 • 201
XXXIII.5-6 • 205-06
XXXIII.6 • 315
XXXIII.27 • 307
XXXIII.31-33 • 206
XXXIII.33-34 • 205, 309

Cassius Dio
Roman History
XLIX.41.1-2 • 221

Cicero
Tusculan Disputations
III.14 • 265

Phillippics
VI.7.19 • 269

Dio Chrysostom
On Kingship
I.17 • 237
II.6 • 237
II.75 • 221
III.40-41 • 237
IV.43-45 • 237

On Peace and War
XXII.3-5 • 260

To the People of Alexandria
XXXII.32 • 221

Diogenes Laertius
Lives of Philosophers
III.4 • 246
III.7 • 198
III.20 • 242
III.21 • 209
III.25 • 291
III.31 • 271
III.46 • 270, 301
V.3-4 & 9-10 • 223
V.51 • 294
VII.3 • 198
VII.121-122 (= *SVF* III.355) • 240
VII.122 (*SVF* III.617) • 217, 240
VIII.8 • 246
VIII.80 • 215
X.130-131 • 276

Empedocles
Fragments
DK 28A46 • 72
DK 31B17.7 • 237
DK 31B26.5 • 237

Epictetus
Discourses
I.6.24 • 231
I.6.26 • 265
I.25.2 • 178
I.28.14 • 241
I.28.26 • 265
II.1.5 • 265
II.5.18-21 • 247
II.5.22-23 • 265
II.19.1-11 • 161
II.22.36 • 266
III.24.1-5 • 245
III.24.4 • 231, 264
III.24.60 • 231
III.24.88 • 231, 264
III.24.104-105 • 264-65
III.24.105 • 231
III.26.28-29 • 228
IV.1.62 & 68 • 178
IV.1.127 • 237
IV.7.16 • 178
IV.12.8 • 178

Handbook
1 • 178
16 • 231, 247, 265
17 • 181

Epicurus
Letter to Menoiceus
130-131 • 276

Fragments
530 • 46

Eunapius
Lives of Philosophers and Sophists
III.1.1-2 • 193
IV.1.4 • 218

Euripides
The Trojans
887-888 • 235

Eutropius
Abbreviated History of Rome
IX.2.3 • 201-02
IX.11.1 • 206

Firmicus Maternus
Astrological Learning
I.7.16 • 195

Fragments of ancient Stoics (*SVF*)
I.216 • 251
II.395 • 32
II.1175 • 234
III.280 • 276
III.352 • 240
III.355 • 240
III.617 • 217
III.768 • 251

Giovanni Dominici
Faint Light in the Night
XVIII • 192

Greek commentaries on Aristotle (*CAG*)
XXI.2 p. 325.15 • 265

Heraclitus
Fragments (DK 22B)
1 • 176
10 • 282
26 • 176
30 • 44
33 • 252, 267

39 • 225
44 • 233
45 • 86, 233
49 • 225, 252
53 • 238
63 • 176
66 • 44
73 • 176
79 • 257
80 • 237
82 • 257
84b • 267
89 • 176
90 • 44
94 • 235
101 • 86-87, 233
102 • 235
104 • 225
113 • 266
114 • 233
115 • 85
136 • 241

Herodotus
History
I.47 • 196
I.135 • 220

Hesiod
Theogony
35 • 196

Works and Days
106-201 • 283
242-43 • 234
287-92 • 66

Hippolytus
Refutation of all Heresies
IV.43.4-5 • 130
VI.17.3 • 130, 167

Homer
Iliad
I.131 • 80
II • 259
II.140 • 231
II.203-07 • 229
II.204 • 229
II.547 • 254
IV • 181
IV.296 • 237
V.426 • 113
VI.232-36 • 79
VII.421-23 • 118
VIII.108 • 254
VIII.281-91 • 188
VIII.282 • 273
VIII.291 • 273
XV.47 • 113
XXII.59-65 • 265

Odyssey
V.398-99 • 231
VI.115-17 • 187
VI.315 • 231
VII.77 • 231
IX.21-36 • 231
X.483-84 • 231
XI.601-03 • 80
XVI.154-212 • 113
XVII.485-87 • 253
XIX.178-79 • 232
XIX.290 • 231

Johannes Zonaras
Abridgment of History
XII.24 • 281
XII.25 • 300
XII.26 • 206

John Stobaeus
Anthology
IV.7.64 • 249
SVF I.216 • 251
SVF III.280 • 276
SVF III.617 • 217

Julian the Apostate
Caesars
XI • 236

Latin inscriptions (*CIL*)
X.2 p. 1006 • 207
XI.1 Perusia 1926-28 • 196

Mani
On the Origin of his Body
18 • 198
130-34 • 198
164 • 198

New Testament
Matthew
5.45-46 • 281

Apocalypse
17.14 • 221

First Letter to Timotheus
1.9 • 46
6.15-16 • 221

Numenius
Fragments
13 • 232

Old Testament
Genesis
1.27 • 93
3.1-15 • 283

Ezekiel
26.7 • 221

Daniel
2.37 • 221

Orosius
Histories against the Pagans
VII.19 • 201
VII.22.1-2 • 205-06

Parmenides
Fragments (DK 28)
A46 • 72
B1.28 • 235
B2.7 • 233
B3 (= fr. 3) • 37, 40, 55
B8.11 • 64
B8.14 • 235
B8.16 • 235
B8.25 • 125
B8.30 • 235
B8.30-31 • 169
B8.32 • 235
B8.32-33 • 64
B8.43-44 • 108
B14 • 58

Philo

On the Making of the World
17-20 • 217
23 • 140

On Flight and Finding
95 • 217

On the Change of Names
27-28 • 139

On the Special Laws
I.31 • 221
II.69 (*SVF* III.352) • 240
II.122 (*SVF* III.352) • 240

Philostratus

Lives of the Sophists
547-548 • 242

Plato

Euthyphro
2a • 215
2d • 142, 208
4b-e • 253
6a-b • 142
10a • 139-40
10a-11b • 139, 143
10c • 139
10d • 140
11a • 139
13d • 142, 183, 208
13d-e • 182
13e-14a • 142, 183
14e-15a • 182
14e-15b • 183
15b • 143
15c-e • 253

Apology of Socrates
20e-21e • 196
27c-d • 153
31c-d • 153
31c-33a • 247-48
34c • 254
34d • 196
35b-d • 282
38d-e • 254
38d-39a • 282
38e-39a • 240
38e-39b • 264
40a-b • 153
40d-e • 247
41c-e • 247

Crito
46c • 265
47d • 236
47d-e • 251
47d-48b • 240
48a • 221
48c • 251, 253
49c-d • 253
50c-51c • 253
51b • 251

Phaedo
58a-b • 259
62b • 21
62b-c • 251
64d • 271
65c-d • 247
66a-67b • 21
67d-e • 247
67d-68b • 307
69b-d • 275
72c • 54
72e-77a • 25, 27

74a • 226
77e • 265
78c • 97
78d • 97
79d-e • 30, 36
79d-80b • 32
79e-80a • 141, 165, 183
80a • 166, 214
80b • 281
80c • 25
82a • 237
82a-b • 248
82b-c • 295
82c • 245
89c-e • 265
95d • 48, 279
95e • 128
97b-c • 54
97b-98b • 301
97c-d • 145
98a-b • 128
99a • 244
99b • 128
100b • 32, 117
101b-102a • 124
103b-d • 49
107b • 32
107d • 150, 153
107d-e • 46, 234
107e • 44
113a • 183
113d • 46, 234
113d-114c • 219
114c • 45, 295
115d • 83, 295
115e • 35
117e-118a • 25
118a • 48, 279

Cratylus
385e-386a • 179
387d-390b • 222, 234, 250
390d • 233
390d-e • 222
393a • 222
395e-396c • 229
397d-398c • 153
397e-398b • 77
400a • 176
400b-c • 307
406d-407a • 241
409a-b • 60
412a • 70
412c-d • 284
415c-d • 176
438c • 222, 234
440a-e • 237

Theaetetus
146a • 187, 281
152a • 176
153a-c • 176
156a-b • 95, 147, 170, 173-74
156a-157a • 237
157a • 95, 147, 170, 173-74, 269
166b-c • 97
169d-179c • 252
171e-172d • 253
175a • 258
175b-d • 215
175c • 221
175d-176c • 266
176a-b • 231, 275
176a-e • 247
176b • 57, 89, 253, 275
176d-e • 235
181c-182b • 237
182b • 269

208c-209a • 50
209a • 50

Sophist
229d • 99
235c • 215, 221
244b-245b • 125
245d • 37
247d-e • 172-73, 216, 269
248a-b • 95
248c • 172-73, 216, 269
248e-249a • 61
248e-249b • 54
249a • 219
251a-c • 97
253e-254b • 146
254a-b • 27, 43
254e • 103
255c • 126
259e • 317

Statesman
259a-d • 215, 224
260e • 277
262c-d • 258
273b • 117
273e • 216
273e-275a • 234
274e-275a • 216
274e-275e • 237
275c-276d • 265
276e • 265
279a-b • 222, 250
281d • 244
284b-285c • 252
284e • 281
288e-290a • 246
291d-292a • 257, 264
292e • 266
292e-293a • 215, 224
293c • 214
293e-294b • 281
294a • 216
294a-295a • 250
295a • 252-53
297b-c • 216, 266
299e-301c • 252
300a-301a • 253
300c • 214
300c-d • 216
300d-e • 277
300e • 266
300e-301b • 216, 221
301a • 252-53
301b-c • 225
301c-e • 264
301d-e • 225
302d-303b • 264
302e • 216, 225, 231
305a • 229
305d • 281
307e-308a • 237, 240
309b-c • 282
310b-d • 270
310c-e • 243
311b-c • 282

Parmenides
127b • 271
129c • 98
132b-c • 29, 33, 54
132d-133a • 84
133a-134e • 98
133d-e • 269
133d-134a • 165, 183
134d • 141, 165
134d-e • 183
137c-d • 74, 76

137c-142a • 75
137d • 78
138e • 89, 96, 100
139a • 28
139b-d • 103
139d-e • 103
141e • 63, 172
142a • 72, 219
142b • 37
142b-155e • 90
142c-e • 137
142d-e • 64
143b • 63, 103, 112, 125
144a • 64, 137
144b-c • 99
144c • 124
144e • 98
146a-b • 103, 112
146b • 63, 125
146d • 63, 103, 112
155e-157b • 112
156b • 103
156d • 59
156d-e • 59, 281
157b-159b • 90
162b-163b • 106
162d-e • 28
162e • 82, 176
164b-165e • 85
165d • 25
166b • 105

Philebus
12b • 188, 233, 270
14c-e • 97
15a • 128
15a-c • 78, 106
16d-e • 99
17d-e • 252
20b • 114, 128
20b-21a • 124, 126
20d • 85, 100, 128
20e-21a • 128
22c • 81, 128
22c-e • 56
22d • 128
22d-e • 81
26b • 52, 233, 270
26e • 127
27a • 49, 127, 165, 183, 244
28c • 215
30a-b • 19
30c • 126, 128, 136
30d • 215, 230
30d-e • 128
31a • 128
34a-c • 25, 114
41b • 246
43a • 237
45d-e • 272
48e • 245
48e-49a • 227
49a • 247
49b-c • 225
52b • 247
52d • 100, 102, 124
53c • 237
53d • 126
54c • 85, 100
54d • 237
55d • 266
55e-58a • 269
56b-e • 230
56b-58a • 229
58b-d • 214
58c-d • 221
60b • 56, 85, 100
60b-c • 124, 126, 128

61a-b • 62, 81
62a-c • 62, 81
63b • 78, 106, 128
64c • 56, 62, 81
64e • 219
65c-d • 221
65e-66a • 270
66a • 281
66b • 52, 221
67b • 317

Symposium
180d-e • 188, 270
182d • 240
192e • 117
196c • 216
201d-212b • 270
202d-203a • 153
203a • 176
203b-204a • 246
205d • 246
206c-d • 79
207d-208b • 97
209a-e • 214, 233
209e-212a • 265
210c • 252
210e • 59
210e-212a • 70
211c • 252
211d • 78
211d-e • 271
211e-212a • 57
212a • 227, 247
218d-219a • 79
218e • 70

Phaedrus
245a • 317
245c • 91, 100
245c-e • 32
246a-b • 24
246a-248e • 135
246a-257b • 23
246b-c • 20, 46, 223
246b-e • 80
246c • 229
246c-e • 21
246e • 229
247a • 24, 108
247c • 154
247c-d • 229
247d • 39, 44, 108
247d-e • 55
247d-248a • 43
247d-248b • 23
248a • 24, 80, 108, 116
248b-c • 21
248c • 42, 154
248c-249b • 44, 240
248d • 252
249b • 151
249c • 25
251b • 187
252d • 24, 108
252d-e • 77
253b • 222-23
254b • 62, 219
254e • 154
256b • 246, 282
259b-d • 317
266b-c • 215
270a • 281
270d • 216
278b-d • 233

First Alcibiades
104e-105a • 271
109a-c • 260

122a • 165, 183, 222
129b • 87, 173
130c-d • 87
130d • 173
131e-132a • 271
132a • 254, 279
132d-133b • 43
133d • 73
133e • 260
134c-135b • 257
135c • 240
135e • 264

Theages
125a-b • 223

Charmides
156d-e • 215
156e-157a • 48, 187
159c-160d • 176
175b-c • 29

Laches
191a-b • 254
195c-d • 240

Euthydemus
281b-c • 246
289d-292c • 215
291c • 229
301a • 103, 113
306b • 215
307a • 225, 266

Protagoras
322c-323c • 266
323b-c • 252
341e • 146
345d • 169
356d-357b • 179

Gorgias
464b • 213
470e • 270
473e • 248
474e • 252
476d-e • 267
481d-482a • 255
504d • 46, 52
504d-e • 213, 265
506d-e • 46, 52
508a • 225
512a-b • 240
513c • 255
519b-c • 264
523e • 46, 234

Meno
73d • 269
80d • 26
80d-e • 29
80e-86c • 25
81c-d • 27
88c-89a • 245
90a • 242
94b-c • 246
99b-c • 275
99d-100a • 146
99e-100a • 223
100a • 224

Greater Hippias
289b • 257
297a • 49, 130, 166
297c • 49
298b • 252

Lesser Hippias
375d-e • 245

Ion
533d-534e • 72
534c • 317

Menexenus
235e • 270
238c-d • 264
245d • 258
245d-e • 258

Republic
328b-331d • 199, 243
331e • 236, 240
336b-d • 237
343a-c • 237
345c-d • 237
347c-d • 280
361d • 77
368a-b • 223
369b-c • 207
370a-b • 226
370b-c • 281
373d-374b • 238
375b-376b • 260
375e-376b • 238
377e-378a • 142
379a-380c • 183
379b • 127, 141
381c • 141
381d • 253
382b-d • 277
387d-e • 264
389b • 277
410a-412b • 269
415a-c • 77, 80
416a • 237
416d-e • 246
420c-d • 266
423b-d • 279
423c-d • 82
423d-e • 124, 233
427e-435a • 276
430c • 275
430e-431a • 168
433d-e • 77
434a-b • 225
435b-442d • 75, 80, 117
435e-436a • 276, 279
436a-437a • 107, 155
436e • 155
438a-b • 126, 173
440d • 237
442e-443a • 278
443a • 236
443b-c • 276
443e • 276
445d • 222
454d-456e • 270
459c-d • 277
459d-e • 270
460e • 299
470b-471b • 258
473c-d • 223
473c-e • 215
490a-b • 246
500b-e • 232
500b-501e • 265
500d • 275
500e • 257
501b • 80
502a • 264
505a • 161
505d • 227
505e • 161, 164
506e • 113
506e-507b • 28
507d-508b • 57, 65
507d-509d • 60

508a-b • 27, 89
508a-d • 43
508b • 28, 65, 113
508c • 27
508d-509a • 89
508e • 107, 135
508e-509a • 65, 227
509a • 70, 94
509b • 37, 63, 66, 99, 127, 164
509d • 214-15
510a • 25
510b • 124
511a • 39
511b • 116, 124
511b-e • 28
511d-e • 23
514a • 284
514a-521c • 46
515c-516a • 106
517b • 28
517b-c • 60, 127
517d-e • 77
518d-e • 248
519a • 283
519c • 295
519c-d • 278
519d • 82
519e-520a • 280
520b • 279
520b-521b • 215
520c • 279
520d-521b • 208
521a • 246
521b • 248, 269
522c-e • 229
522e • 230
524d-e • 69
524d-535a • 229
525a • 69
525a-c • 259
525b • 230
532e • 66
534c-d • 176
543a • 215
544a-d • 219
546c-547a • 264
547b • 119
550c-563e • 257
555e-556b • 245
557e • 268
559c • 272
559e-560d • 238
562a-580a • 252
562d • 240
562e-563a • 258
564c-565a • 246
565d-566a • 237
568a-b • 223
573c • 251
576e • 215
580b-c • 223
588b-590d • 75, 80, 117
588d-590b • 304
588d-590d • 181
588d-e • 241, 247
589a-b • 247
590c • 266
590e-591a • 257
592a-b • 280
592b • 116, 257
596b-d • 29, 68, 216
597e • 215
603e • 264
610a-c • 180
611a • 44
611a-612a • 117
611b-612a • 80
611c • 77

611e • 116
611e-612a • 78
613a • 57, 89
614a-621d • 46
614c • 46, 234
615b • 282
616b-617d • 107
616c • 19, 249
616c-617d • 150
617d • 44
617d-e • 150
617d-620e • 43, 150, 153, 236
617e • 46, 95, 102, 127, 139, 183, 236, 275
619e-620d • 240, 248
620b • 249

Timaeus
19b-c • 216, 237, 257
19c • 238
24b-c • 236, 257
24b-d • 216
24c-25d • 260
25b-c • 258
26c-27b • 216, 257
27d-28c • 237
28a • 129, 236
28b-c • 90
28c • 113, 129, 236
29d • 126
29e-30a • 139, 157
30a • 52
30a-c • 143
30b-c • 34
30c • 29, 109
31a • 54
33a • 126
33d • 137
34a-35a • 107
34b • 76
34b-c • 19, 140, 183
35a • 75-76, 78, 80, 85, 89, 113-14
36c-37c • 107
36e • 250
36e-37c • 23
37a • 72
37a-b • 32, 91
37c • 24, 82, 113
38d • 60, 126
39d • 44
39d-e • 24, 108
39e • 29, 40, 54
40b • 126
40b-c • 60
40d-e • 153
41a • 113
41a-d • 139
41a-42e • 232
41b-d • 157
41c-d • 20, 46
41c-42e • 113, 180
41d • 44, 75, 78, 80, 85, 89, 155, 250
41d-42a • 183
41d-42e • 19
41e • 19, 150
41e-42e • 240
42b • 235
42b-d • 44
42c • 235
42c-d • 161
42d-e • 46
42e • 19-20, 46, 127, 183, 236
43c • 284
44c • 126
45b • 27
45b-e • 57, 65
45c • 72
46c-e • 244

46d-e • 32, 91
47b • 126
47b-c • 24, 108
48a • 99, 127-28, 217, 248, 253
49a • 99, 128
49a-50a • 237
50b-51b • 99
50d • 270
52a-b • 99, 128, 176
52b-c • 176
53b • 149
59b • 82
69c-d • 20
70a • 254
73d • 222
76d • 244
76d-e • 248
77b-c • 32, 91
78e • 222
86b-87b • 248
87a-b • 243, 257, 268
87c • 70
87d • 227
89a • 32, 91
89e • 19, 75, 78, 80, 85, 89
90a • 153
90a-c • 153
90b-c • 20, 42, 82
90c • 83
90d • 117
90e-92c • 240, 248

Critias
112d-e • 258
114d • 264
120a-c • 208
120d-121c • 264
121b • 234

Minos
318e-320b • 232

Laws
624a-b • 232
625e-626a • 238
626d-627a • 239
626e • 238
627b • 239
636c-d • 271
644c • 98
644d-e • 181, 241
644e-645b • 82
645b • 231
681b-c • 253
690b • 240
690b-c • 245
693d-e • 221, 263, 265
709b-c • 249
709e-710d • 216
710c-d • 224
710d-e • 216
712d-e • 263
713d-e • 265
713e-714a • 232
714a • 252
715e-716a • 235
715e-716b • 154
716c • 179
716c-d • 57, 89
717d • 154
718e-719a • 66
730c • 221
731c • 236
731d-732a • 111
732c • 153
735e-736a • 257
741a • 169
742c • 245

756e • 263
757a • 82, 227
757a-758a • 144, 225, 234, 266
757d-758a • 282
766a • 257, 282
770c-e • 278
772d-773e • 270
776b-778a • 240, 269
776d • 267
793a-d • 253
803c • 181
803c-d • 241
804b • 181, 241
806d-e • 246
815a • 241
818b • 169
818c • 77
819c • 229-30
819d-820a • 77
836c-837d • 271
841d • 271
854a • 242
854a-d • 236
854b • 240
854c • 251
856b-c • 279
856c • 234
870d-e • 154
872c • 253
872d-873a • 154
872e • 235
872e-873a • 240
873a • 249
873c-d • 251
874e-875a • 249, 257
875a-b • 276
877a • 153
885b-888d • 143
885c-d • 84
887e • 85, 236
892a • 85, 180
892a-b • 222
892a-893b • 19
892c • 85, 180
892c-897b • 84
893b-d • 107, 214
894a • 77
894b-c • 154
894d-895c • 32
896a-b • 32, 91
896d • 236
896d-e • 19
896d-897d • 283
896e-897b • 32
897a • 136, 163
897c • 229
897c-d • 108
897c-898b • 24, 107
898a • 107
898a-b • 214
900a-b • 278
900a-d • 279
901a-903a • 145
902b • 251
902b-903a • 230
902b-904a • 216
902d • 208, 222
902d-903a • 144, 161, 279
903a-907b • 139
903b-e • 228
903c • 222
903c-d • 276, 283
903d-e • 236, 240
904a-b • 180
904a-c • 188
904b-c • 46, 154
904c • 19
904c-905b • 235

905e • 208, 222, 229-30
905e-906a • 284
905e-907d • 216
906a • 153, 251
906a-b • 237
906d-e • 237
906d-907d • 143
907c-d • 100
907d-e • 234
908a • 208
909a • 208
910c • 234
913a-914b • 242
913d-914a • 234
920d-e • 246
923a-c • 276
924a-928d • 196
926a • 196
951d-952c • 208
957c • 252
957c-d • 232
959a-b • 35
959c-d • 249
960a • 208
960c-d • 188
961a-962a • 229
961a-962d • 208
961e-962a • 208
962d • 254
962d-e • 275
963a • 275
963d • 275
964e-965a • 208
965b • 233, 275
966d-e • 84
968a • 208, 245
969b • 208

Epinomis
973c • 283
991b • 317
991d • 84
992d-e • 208

Second Letter
310e • 224
310e-311b • 224
312e • 127, 214
312e-313a • 124, 219
314c • 299

Third Letter
315d-316a • 216
319a-d • 258
319d • 216

Sixth Letter
323d • 113, 135

Seventh Letter
324b • 216
325a • 265
325a-326a • 248
325d • 207
326a-b • 224
328b-d • 280
332e • 216, 258
335a • 247, 265
335b • 188, 270
336a • 216, 258
341c-d • 59
342a-343a • 219
342a-344b • 108, 214
351b-c • 260
351c • 216

Eighth Letter
353a-c • 281
353a-e • 258
353e-354b • 224
354a-c • 216

Ninth Letter
358a-b • 280

Plotinus

Enneads [chronologically]
I.1[53].7 • 47, 80, 100-01, 187, 217
I.1.10 • 80-81, 100-01, 248, 270
I.1.10-13 • 101
I.1.11 • 80-81, 87, 100-01, 161, 185, 209
I.1.12 • 118, 256
I.1.13 • 38, 41, 85, 87, 89, 101
I.2[19].1 • 47, 57, 275-76, 283
I.2.2 • 57, 84, 222, 276
I.2.3 • 57, 257, 275, 277
I.2.4 • 112, 115, 160
I.2.5 • 152, 208, 271
I.2.6 • 47, 77, 80, 101, 153, 208, 235, 275, 280
I.2.7 • 29, 57, 255, 275-77
I.3[20].1 • 22, 33, 56, 63, 159
I.3.2 • 252, 271
I.3.4 • 34, 64
I.3.5 • 160
I.3.6 • 255
I.4[46] • 248
I.4.4 • 81, 83, 97, 114, 158, 162, 248, 264
I.4.5 • 264
I.4.6 • 106, 116, 159, 175, 245
I.4.7 • 83, 240-41, 245, 247-49, 251, 263-65, 267, 305
I.4.8 • 178, 245, 264-65, 278
I.4.9 • 83, 101, 176
I.4.10 • 55, 78, 82, 255, 278
I.4.11 • 208, 265, 280
I.4.12 • 270
I.4.13 • 81, 161, 185, 277
I.4.14 • 247, 272, 295
I.4.15 • 245, 254, 282
I.4.16 • 57, 81-82, 88, 159, 247, 251
I.5[36].10 • 246, 280-81
I.6[1].1 • 70, 82, 252
I.6.3 • 313
I.6.4 • 252
I.6.5 • 79, 227, 240, 252
I.6.6 • 23, 57, 78, 252, 271, 275-76
I.6.7 • 70, 78, 81, 95, 102, 112, 232, 247, 265
I.6.8 • 43, 81, 113, 160, 188, 231, 270-71
I.6.9 • 27, 70, 77, 219, 252
I.7[54].1 • 60, 84, 163
I.7.2 • 56, 85, 182
I.7.3 • 21, 246
I.8[51].1 • 33, 36
I.8.2 • 26, 30, 41, 84, 124, 179, 217, 219, 227
I.8.3 • 124, 179
I.8.5 • 161, 245, 283
I.8.7 • 24, 117, 277
I.8.8 • 49
I.8.12 • 88, 117
I.8.13 • 176, 276
I.8.14 • 109, 112
I.8.15 • 227, 234, 283
I.9[16] • 251, 284
II.1[40].1 • 139, 142
II.1.4 • 85, 136, 217-18, 224, 248
II.1.5 • 48, 83
II.1.6 • 82
II.1.7 • 65
II.1.8 • 99

II.2[14].1 • 108
II.3[52].1 • 242
II.3.2 • 228-29, 242, 272
II.3.6 • 85, 142, 242, 270
II.3.7 • 20, 43, 216
II.3.8 • 52, 117, 217, 234, 245
II.3.9 • 29, 101-02, 150, 153, 159, 165, 186, 275, 283
II.3.11 • 227, 268, 283
II.3.12 • 20, 283
II.3.13 • 46, 88, 123, 164, 182-83, 219, 227-29
II.3.14 • 224-25, 242-44, 264, 271
II.3.15 • 19, 116-17, 150, 153, 160, 163, 236, 281
II.3.16 • 46, 75, 283-84
II.3.17 • 228, 283
II.3.18 • 176, 218, 225, 241, 283
II.4[12].5 • 111-12, 175
II.4.7 • 99
II.4.10 • 72
II.4.14 • 24, 49
II.5[25].1 • 29, 31
II.5.2 • 26, 30, 81, 242, 247, 279
II.5.3 • 31, 176
II.5.4 • 49
II.6[17].1 • 52
II.6.2 • 52
II.6.3 • 51-53, 149
II.8[35].1 • 259
II.9[33].1 • 29, 88, 124, 137
II.9.2 • 97, 100-01
II.9.3 • 86, 106, 172
II.9.4 • 284
II.9.6 • 29, 284
II.9.7 • 19, 217, 251, 284
II.9.8 • 247, 251, 266
II.9.9 • 96, 107, 145, 161, 170, 182, 208, 217, 228, 232, 244-46, 250-51, 254, 266, 274, 281-82
II.9.11 • 167
II.9.12 • 49
II.9.13 • 20, 34, 149, 282-83
II.9.14 • 123
II.9.15 • 241, 255, 257
II.9.16 • 145, 271
II.9.17 • 49, 161, 183, 252, 272
II.9.18 • 68, 160, 226-27, 282
III.1[3].1 • 129, 242, 270
III.1.2 • 46, 50, 99, 145, 150, 154, 170, 242, 250
III.1.3 • 99, 217, 229
III.1.4 • 45, 173, 248, 250
III.1.5 • 35, 45-46, 173, 253, 270
III.1.6 • 270
III.1.7 • 45, 167, 171, 257
III.1.8 • 45, 136, 163, 247, 257, 267, 280
III.1.9 • 154, 161, 164, 242, 275, 280
III.1.10 • 78, 177, 248
III.2[47] • 142, 145
III.2.1 • 84, 123, 125, 143-44, 229, 255
III.2.2 • 128, 167, 212, 216-17, 238, 241, 248
III.2.3 • 88, 137, 182, 227
III.2.4 • 21, 42-43, 46, 84, 151, 155, 160, 175, 219, 225, 227, 234-36, 238, 242, 247, 264, 272, 282-83
III.2.5 • 176, 208, 234, 241-43, 246, 279
III.2.6 • 144, 225, 227, 239, 243, 265
III.2.7 • 42-43, 45, 81, 143, 163, 183, 241, 243
III.2.8 • 34, 60, 80, 170, 222, 236-37, 239-40, 243, 246, 256-57, 264, 282
III.2.9 • 45, 164, 183, 234, 236, 238, 260, 267, 280, 282-84

III.2.10 • 45, 143, 163-64, 183, 236, 267
III.2.11 • 246, 251, 266
III.2.12 • 34, 228
III.2.13 • 44, 144, 154, 234, 240, 243, 282-83
III.2.14 • 49, 81-82, 97, 114, 137, 282-83
III.2.15 • 181, 230, 238, 241, 245-47, 254, 264, 283
III.2.16 • 229, 238, 241, 255, 283
III.2.17 • 43, 146, 181, 226-28, 236, 252, 281
III.2.18 • 21, 74, 150, 226-27, 241
III.3[48] • 143
III.3.1 • 150, 238, 282
III.3.2 • 142, 183, 222, 229-31
III.3.3 • 34, 123, 146, 152, 155, 163, 183, 222, 226-28, 274, 283
III.3.4 • 81, 155, 160, 182-83, 234, 267
III.3.5 • 143-44, 158, 161, 228, 267, 271
III.3.6 • 35, 47, 146, 155
III.3.7 • 35, 145, 186, 283
III.4[15].1 • 117
III.4.2 • 248
III.4.3 • 37-38, 41, 85, 87, 153, 187, 224
III.4.4 • 283
III.4.5 • 45, 151-53
III.4.6 • 20, 82-83, 153-54, 242, 249, 277
III.5[50].1 • 79, 225, 256, 271-72
III.5.2 • 142
III.5.3 • 19, 73, 78, 101, 182, 247
III.5.4 • 19, 253, 271
III.5.5 • 137, 176, 253
III.5.7 • 40, 55, 123, 153, 161,
III.5.8 • 217, 229, 246
III.5.9 • 82, 85
III.6[26].1 • 260
III.6.2 • 240
III.6.3 • 47, 123, 240, 260
III.6.4 • 240
III.6.5 • 47, 66-67, 78, 186
III.6.6 • 55, 176
III.6.8 • 49
III.6.9 • 49, 238
III.6.18 • 36, 49, 55
III.6.19 • 49, 270, 272
III.7[45].1 • 123
III.7.2 • 219
III.7.4 • 64
III.7.5 • 33, 155
III.7.6 • 59, 135
III.7.7 • 33
III.7.11 • 26, 110, 155, 284, 295, 299, 317
III.7.12 • 26, 59, 179
III.7.13 • 19, 26, 33
III.8[30] • 29, 33
III.8.1 • 255, 266
III.8.2 • 109, 266, 313
III.8.4 • 176, 246, 266, 313
III.8.5 • 278
III.8.6 • 79, 82, 176, 266
III.8.7 • 29, 116, 266
III.8.8 • 30, 34, 54-55, 68, 91, 108, 111
III.8.9 • 34, 54-55, 72, 89, 94, 96, 104-05
III.8.10 • 86, 90, 105, 111
III.8.11 • 40, 69, 158, 180
III.9[13].1 • 29, 55, 165
III.9.2 • 37, 41, 81, 116
III.9.7 • 55, 111
III.9.9 • 140, 142, 182
IV.1[21] • 76, 109, 160
IV.2[4].1 • 19, 76, 108
IV.2.1-2 • 76
IV.2.2 • 53, 55, 76, 78, 109, 217
IV.3[27].1 • 19, 54, 72, 86, 96, 110, 123

IV.3.2 • 21, 36-37, 41, 110, 155
IV.3.3 • 234
IV.3.4 • 21, 142, 208, 268
IV.3.5 • 24, 34, 75-76, 101, 103, 110, 112, 149, 159
IV.3.6 • 19, 21-22, 68, 74, 84, 87, 110, 158-60, 186, 208, 216, 247
IV.3.7 • 19-21, 74, 161, 252-53
IV.3.8 • 20, 25, 33, 42-44, 68, 74, 76, 85-86, 160-61, 268
IV.3.10 • 65, 176
IV.3.11 • 211
IV.3.12 • 21, 32, 44, 52, 116, 143-45, 152, 160, 234, 251, 284
IV.3.13 • 44-45, 143-44, 149, 155, 164, 183, 228, 234, 243, 251, 271
IV.3.14 • 43, 110, 247
IV.3.15 • 19-20, 45-46, 68, 90, 234, 242-43, 247
IV.3.16 • 46, 52, 154, 162, 228, 234, 241
IV.3.17 • 28, 108, 113, 248, 251
IV.3.18 • 43, 216
IV.3.19 • 76, 89
IV.3.24 • 44, 150, 152, 154, 234-35, 251
IV.3.25 • 25, 144
IV.3.27 • 25, 68, 78, 80
IV.3.28 • 237-38
IV.3.31 • 238, 266
IV.3.32 • 25, 246, 278
IV.4[28].1 • 25, 41, 59
IV.4.2 • 25, 41-42, 48, 69, 85, 103-04
IV.4.3 • 25, 68, 110, 115
IV.4.4 • 25, 56, 72-73, 76, 103
IV.4.5 • 19, 26, 30, 45, 66, 110, 251
IV.4.8 • 41
IV.4.9 • 44, 230, 283
IV.4.11 • 55, 217, 222
IV.4.12 • 144, 154
IV.4.14 • 24
IV.4.15 • 59
IV.4.16 • 108, 185, 216
IV.4.17 • 103, 184, 191, 226, 254, 257, 265, 267, 281
IV.4.18 • 102, 124, 238
IV.4.21 • 123, 247
IV.4.24 • 237
IV.4.26 • 60, 175
IV.4.28 • 238, 256
IV.4.29 • 24, 49
IV.4.30 • 60
IV.4.31 • 186, 236, 242, 269, 271
IV.4.32 • 19-20, 75, 90, 238
IV.4.34 • 35, 186, 267
IV.4.35 • 153, 161, 174, 216, 267
IV.4.36 • 144, 153, 283
IV.4.39 • 49, 163, 250, 275
IV.4.40 • 238
IV.4.42 • 236, 245, 256
IV.4.43 • 254, 256
IV.4.44 • 46, 48, 95, 251, 256, 266, 269, 272-73, 277
IV.4.45 • 20, 155, 176, 181, 228, 234, 279
IV.5[29].4 • 65
IV.5.7 • 24, 34
IV.5.8 • 72, 123
IV.6[41].1 • 69
IV.6.2 • 34
IV.6.3 • 35-36, 85-86, 216
IV.7[2].1 • 32, 38
IV.7.3 • 99
IV.7.4 • 35
IV.7.5 • 19-20, 35, 97, 147
IV.7.6 • 109, 249, 357
IV.7.8 • 95, 244
IV.7.83 • 123
IV.7.9 • 119
IV.7.10 • 110

IV.7.12 • 174
IV.7.14 • 34, 90
IV.8[6] • 62-63, 234
IV.8.1 • 10, 23, 32, 44, 61, 63-64, 66, 70, 76, 86, 157, 183, 219, 234, 267, 279
IV.8.2 • 19, 21, 137, 146, 217, 223, 245, 247, 256, 267, 305
IV.8.3 • 30, 34, 37, 250, 266
IV.8.4 • 21, 34, 160, 187, 217, 223-24, 232, 252, 279, 305
IV.8.5 • 46, 50, 166-67, 234, 279
IV.8.6 • 19, 62, 86, 105, 111, 113, 172, 300
IV.8.7 • 223, 225, 234, 255-56, 268
IV.8.8 • 21
IV.9[8].1 • 19
IV.9.2 • 19, 176
IV.9.3 • 20, 38, 76, 268
IV.9.4 • 19, 105, 111
IV.9.5 • 21, 30, 37, 41, 155
V.1[10] • 84, 88, 91-92
V.1.1 • 84-85, 91, 111-13, 130
V.1.2 • 20-21, 100, 119, 163, 282
V.1.3 • 77, 84, 284
V.1.4 • 34, 40, 52, 54-56, 103, 112
V.1.5 • 36, 56
V.1.6 • 28, 34, 56, 59, 65, 67, 78, 81, 84, 88, 103, 111-13, 119, 129, 146, 175, 178, 219
V.1.7 • 65, 86
V.1.8 • 55, 60, 113, 135, 214-15, 217, 233
V.1.9 • 34, 238
V.1.10 • 80, 83, 92
V.1.11 • 70, 83-84, 96-97, 109, 129, 135, 235, 300
V.1.12 • 20, 91, 160, 185
V.2[11].1 • 28, 68, 111, 124, 284
V.2.2 • 26, 62, 91, 174
V.3[49] • 72, 99, 101, 188
V.3.2 • 26, 34-35, 72
V.3.3 • 30, 54, 73, 80, 101-02, 187, 216-17, 234, 238, 246, 266, 278
V.3.4 • 23, 30, 80-81, 101-02, 187, 216-17, 232
V.3.5 • 29, 31, 54, 165
V.3.6 • 30, 166, 255
V.3.7 • 101, 114
V.3.8 • 37, 165
V.3.9 • 33
V.3.10 • 34, 66, 69, 75-76, 78, 84, 91, 103-04, 118, 124, 174-75,
V.3.11 • 40, 68, 124, 164
V.3.12 • 28, 84, 124, 172, 187, 216-17
V.3.13 • 78, 94, 105, 124, 137
V.3.14 • 30, 72
V.3.15 • 34, 55, 63, 75, 85, 98, 103, 105, 124, 137, 172
V.3.16 • 86, 106, 124
V.3.17 • 55, 58-59, 65, 72, 81, 101, 106, 124, 137, 277
V.4[7].1 • 34, 86, 105, 111, 124, 219
V.4.2 • 34, 54-55, 63, 66, 68, 86
V.5[32].1 • 82, 241, 268
V.5.2 • 56, 64
V.5.3 • 62, 217-19, 221-22, 229, 249, 259, 300, 304
V.5.4 • 69-70, 85, 102-03, 124, 179, 230, 259
V.5.5 • 124
V.5.7 • 28, 50, 56-59, 61, 65, 69, 78
V.5.8 • 57-60, 62, 67, 70-71, 104-05, 118
V.5.9 • 103, 124, 142, 183
V.5.10 • 59, 86, 103, 111, 172, 175
V.5.11 • 176, 179
V.5.12 • 50, 59, 103, 106, 113-14, 160, 217, 226, 272, 282

V.5.13 • 78, 105, 140, 158, 223
V.6[24].1 • 84
V.6.2 • 124
V.6.3 • 63, 124, 131, 166
V.6.4 • 58, 65, 124
V.6.6 • 39-40, 55, 140, 241
V.7[18] • 33-34, 44
V.7.1 • 32, 34-36, 44, 160
V.7.2 • 19, 32, 35, 44, 270
V.7.3 • 34-35, 44, 150, 160
V.8[31] • 68
V.8.1 • 99, 252, 313, 317
V.8.2 • 26, 72, 81, 252, 266, 271
V.8.3 • 79
V.8.4 • 37, 39, 41, 55, 235
V.8.5 • 36, 145, 254
V.8.6 • 39, 49, 123, 200
V.8.7 • 21, 24, 49, 60, 104, 115, 131, 184, 223, 305
V.8.9 • 41, 69
V.8.10 • 44, 47, 55, 59, 68-69, 92, 106, 217, 317
V.8.11 • 30, 48, 55, 68-70, 73, 100, 102-03, 160, 162
V.8.12 • 30, 69-70
V.8.13 • 26, 69, 81, 103, 217
V.9[5].1 • 231, 245, 248
V.9.2 • 30, 56, 70, 81, 84, 176, 226, 252, 255
V.9.5 • 26, 31, 45, 54-55, 61, 77, 86, 137, 232
V.9.6 • 34, 55, 108
V.9.7 • 55
V.9.8 • 29, 30, 33, 36, 41, 54, 76
V.9.9 • 41, 155
V.9.10 • 55, 192
V.9.11 • 48, 83, 137, 228-29, 247, 255, 313
V.9.12 • 32
V.9.13 • 275
V.9.14 • 36, 105, 111, 313
VI.1[42] • 174, 295
VI.1.1 • 123
VI.1.6 • 179, 226, 239, 269
VI.1.10 • 149
VI.1.11 • 149
VI.1.14 • 203
VI.1.19 • 34, 173, 175, 239
VI.1.20 • 49, 51, 174, 239
VI.1.21 • 173, 180, 239
VI.1.22 • 173-75, 180
VI.1.23 • 239
VI.1.26 • 102, 124
VI.1.28 • 123
VI.1.29 • 100, 149, 277
VI.2[43] • 174, 295
VI.2.2 • 99
VI.2.4 • 36
VI.2.5 • 19, 48, 51
VI.2.6 • 20, 103, 111-12
VI.2.8 • 34, 176
VI.2.9 • 34, 103
VI.2.10 • 34, 55, 125, 230
VI.2.11 • 100, 230, 282
VI.2.12 • 74
VI.2.14 • 52, 81
VI.2.20 • 27, 30-31, 37-38, 41
VI.2.22 • 33-34, 36, 39, 49, 99
VI.3[44] • 174, 295
VI.3.1 • 99, 258
VI.3.5 • 34, 50
VI.3.9 • 99
VI.3.16 • 149, 276
VI.3.17 • 34
VI.3.22 • 63, 111-12, 176, 281
VI.3.23 • 158, 176
VI.3.26 • 269
VI.3.28 • 170, 174, 186

VI.4[22].1 • 32
VI.4.4 • 19, 24, 35, 75, 103, 111-12
VI.4.6 • 152, 234, 236
VI.4.7 • 58, 60, 65
VI.4.10 • 24, 60, 124, 180
VI.4.14 • 19, 34-35, 43, 55, 73, 81, 100
VI.4.15 • 185, 253-54, 266
VI.4.16 • 30, 37, 44, 110, 252, 254, 283
VI.5[23].1 • 70, 74, 85, 97, 111, 117
VI.5.2 • 51
VI.5.4 • 108
VI.5.5 • 55, 105, 108
VI.5.6 • 55
VI.5.7 • 31, 54, 64, 85, 91, 154
VI.5.8 • 33, 35
VI.5.9 • 62, 64, 85, 300
VI.5.10 • 95, 253, 266
VI.5.11 • 49, 284
VI.5.12 • 86, 110, 253
VI.6[34].1 • 99, 172
VI.6.2 • 259
VI.6.6 • 77, 241
VI.6.7 • 55
VI.6.9 • 88
VI.6.10 • 176, 242
VI.6.12 • 40, 230, 259
VI.6.13 • 75, 230
VI.6.14 • 241
VI.6.15 • 26, 81, 241
VI.6.16 • 230
VI.6.18 • 137
VI.7[38].1 • 47, 78, 115, 136
VI.7.2 • 51, 55, 80-81, 103, 136
VI.7.3 • 48, 50, 81, 155
VI.7.4 • 81, 101
VI.7.5 • 81, 101
VI.7.6 • 26, 34, 37, 80-81, 84, 87, 101, 153, 159, 185-86, 209, 284
VI.7.7 • 34, 80, 284
VI.7.8 • 29, 40, 80, 226
VI.7.9 • 26, 29, 40, 80, 87, 226, 238
VI.7.10 • 34, 186, 238, 277
VI.7.13 • 124
VI.7.14 • 33, 99, 270
VI.7.16 • 33, 35, 64, 68
VI.7.17 • 62-63, 99, 219, 300
VI.7.18 • 29, 40, 76, 80, 158
VI.7.19 • 129
VI.7.21 • 87
VI.7.22 • 62, 77, 87, 95, 114, 161, 176, 181, 187
VI.7.23 • 77, 124, 142
VI.7.24 • 140, 142, 176
VI.7.25 • 78, 140, 142, 181
VI.7.26 • 271
VI.7.27 • 100
VI.7.29 • 245
VI.7.30 • 38, 113
VI.7.31 • 72, 77, 181, 272
VI.7.32 • 70, 86, 88
VI.7.33 • 55, 69-70, 179
VI.7.34 • 34, 59, 67-68, 72, 78, 81, 95, 99, 104, 110, 112, 154, 221, 246-47, 272
VI.7.35 • 38, 64, 67, 71, 81-82, 84, 158
VI.7.36 • 26, 56, 59-60, 161
VI.7.37 • 56, 124, 172, 266
VI.7.38 • 124
VI.7.39 • 34, 66, 145, 219
VI.7.40 • 55-56, 94, 166
VI.7.41 • 34, 55-56, 65, 72, 103, 140
VI.7.42 • 88, 217, 219
VI.8[39] • 130, 133-34, 137, 139, 141-43, 165, 168-69, 178, 180, 217, 274, 319
VI.8.1 • 143, 164-65, 171, 180, 280
VI.8.2 • 40, 164, 170, 182, 184, 187, 280
VI.8.3 • 171, 232, 271
VI.8.4 • 141, 170-74, 267, 277
VI.8.5 • 222, 275, 280, 283

VI.8.6 • 164, 184, 221, 248, 275, 277-78
VI.8.7 • 40, 45, 56, 62, 68, 88, 124, 138, 141, 162, 164-69, 171, 175, 178-79, 219, 269, 275, 300
VI.8.8 • 124, 126, 162, 165, 171, 219
VI.8.9 • 100, 129, 141-42, 155, 168-69, 171, 174, 178, 181, 217, 219
VI.8.10 • 61, 133, 141, 164, 168-69, 171-72, 178, 187, 232, 275
VI.8.11 • 105, 133, 171
VI.8.12 • 162, 164-66, 187, 217, 219, 274-75
VI.8.13 • 67, 85, 100, 131, 133, 140, 142, 166, 171, 176, 179
VI.8.14 • 33, 51, 80, 99, 105, 126, 129, 133-34, 171
VI.8.15 • 61, 73, 124, 162, 165-66, 171, 176, 268, 275
VI.8.16 • 66-67, 132, 146, 158, 165-66, 171, 176, 182, 274
VI.8.17 • 143, 145-46, 171
VI.8.18 • 109, 138, 166, 171-72, 179, 281
VI.8.19 • 142, 171, 183, 274
VI.8.20 • 63, 76, 88, 131-33, 138, 142, 162, 165-66, 174, 178, 183, 217, 274
VI.8.21 • 88, 133, 138, 141-42, 162, 165, 171-72, 174, 178-79, 183, 188, 275
VI.9[9] • 10, 62, 66, 68, 70, 71, 102, 109
VI.9.1 • 24, 105, 129, 180, 230
VI.9.2 • 54, 81
VI.9.3 • 56, 67, 71, 84, 94, 96, 99, 175-76
VI.9.4 • 65-68, 72, 78, 94-96, 100, 110, 271
VI.9.5 • 30-31, 75, 86, 100, 111, 118, 171
VI.9.6 • 40, 75, 83-84, 86, 103, 111, 117, 124, 140, 172, 175, 182
VI.9.7 • 61, 68, 82, 89, 94-96, 99-100, 113, 155, 160, 230, 232, 271, 278
VI.9.8 • 24, 34, 72, 80, 82, 94, 103, 108-09, 111-12, 114, 117, 156, 282
VI.9.9 • 24, 65, 82, 95, 109-11, 113, 115, 135, 140, 180-81, 187-88, 235, 270
VI.9.10 • 34, 66-67, 70, 72, 84, 102, 107, 109, 167
VI.9.11 • 24, 34, 63, 65, 67, 69, 72, 78, 81-82, 84, 95, 99-100, 103, 106, 119, 154-55, 278

Plutarch

On Self-Contradictions of the Stoics
1040c (= *SVF* II.1175) • 234
1056b • 131

Against Colotes
1126a • 233

Life of Theseus
XIII.1 • 259

Life of Alexander
LIV-LV • 220

Life of Caesar
XXXVIII.3-4 • 249

Life of Antony
LIV • 221

Porphyry

Life of Plotinus (*VP*)
1 • 305
1.1-4 • 238
1.1-2.7 • 295
1.13-14 • 303
2.1-31 • 295

2.5-7 • 270
2.5-10 • 195
2.7-15 • 205
2.7-20 • 204
2.7-29 • 206
2.15-20 • 205-06
2.15-22 • 238
2.17-20 • 261
2.17-23 • 205
2.17-25 • 195
2.26-27 • 90
2.29-40 • 193
2.31-33 • 261
3.2-6 • 199
3.3 • 242
3.7-21 • 134
3.17 • 218
3.21-24 • 199
3.22-24 • 193, 202
3.24-32 • 217
3.24-35 • 263
3.35-38 • 303
3.38-42 • 203
3.38-44 • 293
3.38-45 • 261
3.46-4.6 • 261
4.1-3 • 219
4.1-9 • 193-94
4.1-13 • 261
4.8-9 • 292
4.9-11 • 204
4.12 • 218
5.1-5 • 195, 219-20
5.2-5 • 292
5.5-7 • 261
6.1-3 • 261
7 • 199, 248
7.1-5 • 75, 293
7.5-7 • 206, 261
7.12 • 207
7.16-17 • 206, 261
7.17 • 238
7.17-23 • 195, 204, 238
7.17-49 • 262
7.22-24 • 205
7.24 • 204
7.29-30 • 196
7.29-31 • 307
7.31-46 • 206
7.34 • 267
7.46-49 • 245
7.47 • 242
7.49-51 • 293
8.20-22 • 159
9 • 196
9.1-3 • 297
9.1-5 • 270
9.5-9 • 197
9.9 & 14-16 • 197
9.16-18 • 159
10.1-13 • 245
10.15 • 224
10.15-38 • 200
10.35-36 • 224
11 • 216
11.1-8 • 43
11.3-4 • 271
11.8-11 • 47
11.11-19 • 251, 261
12 • 191, 204, 206, 223, 307
12.1-2 • 197, 270, 297
12.2 • 228
12.3 • 209
12.9 • 207-08
12.9-10 • 208
12.9-12 • 207

13.5-7 • 289
13.5-10 • 211
14.2-18 • 289
14.4-7 • 294
14.10-14 • 217
14.12 • 261
14.14-16 • 263
14.18-20 • 143, 263, 293
14.19-20 • 242
14.20-25 • 204, 263
15.1-6 • 273
15.6-17 • 271
15.17 • 188, 273, 281
15.18-21 • 203
15.21-24 • 35
15.21-26 • 297
16 • 96, 318
17.1-18.3 • 134, 261
17.6-10 • 292
17.6-16 • 218
17.10-12 • 263
17.39 • 231
18.1-10 • 303
18.8-23 • 293
19 • 263
19.1-4 • 262
19.1-6 • 261
19.1-13 • 262
19.8-11 • 262
19.10-11 • 263
19.21-24 • 261
19.27-32 • 261
19.34-37 • 261-62
20.1-2 • 293
20.14-15 & 68-71 & 74-81 • 293
20.14-17 • 261
20.29-33 • 263
20.32-33 • 203, 263, 293, 318
20.36-38 • 260
20.36-39 • 263
20.36-40 • 203
20.39-40 • 263
20.48 • 263
20.68-76 • 318
20.71-73 • 130, 217, 263
20.74-76 • 261
20.76-104 • 261
20.90-91 • 293
20.91 • 218, 292
21.1-9 • 261, 263
21.1-16 • 293
21.9-18 • 292
21.9-23 • 196
21.13-14 • 293
21.14 • 218, 292
21.18-19 • 293
21.18-23 • 262-63
22 • 232
22.1-5 • 196
22.1-63 • 196
22.8-10 • 305
22.25-30 • 231
22.27 • 266
22.29 • 235
22.29-30 • 249
22.31-32 • 209
22.34 • 57, 62, 83, 295
22.58 • 83
22.40-44 • 176
22.45-52 • 257
22.45-63 • 295
23.1-2 • 211, 282
23.3-4 & 21-24 • 176
23.11-12 • 62
23.12 • 219
23.12-14 • 193

23.14-18 • 57
23.16-18 • 104
23.28-40 • 295
23.30 • 257
24.1-5 • 292

Life of Pythagoras
XIX • 235

Letter to Marcella
I-III • 273
XVI • 273
XXV • 249
XXVII • 46

Proclus

Commentary on Plato's Parmenides
638-640 • 90
1081.4 • 91
1146 • 131

The Elements of Theology
40 • 131
46 • 131

Pseudo-Aelius Aristides

To the King
19 • 220
20 • 258
21 • 234
22 • 237
34-35 • 258
35 • 220

Seneca

Moral Letters to Lucilius
XXIV.6-8 • 251
XXIV.25 • 251
CXIII.16 • 32

On Providence
II.1-2 • 234
IV.8 • 234

Sibyl

Oracular Replies
XIII.7 • 201
XIII.19-20 • 201

Simonides

Fragments
542.14 • 146
542.29-30 • 169
642 • 236

Sophocles

Antigone
451 • 235

Oedipus in Colonus
1381-82 • 235

Suetonius

Augustus
100 • 249

Tertullian

Against Praxeas
XXXI.1 • 93

Thomas Aquinas

Sum of Theology
I.50.4th reply • 53

Virgil

Aeneid
I.148-53 • 254
II.506-53 • 264

Writers of Augustan History

The three Gordians

XXIII.6 • 198
XXVIII • 201
XXIX.1 • 198

The two Valerians

VIII.2 • 206

The two Gallieni

V.5-6 • 205
VII.4-IX.6 • 219
XI-XVIII • 191
XI.3-6 • 259
XI.6-9 • 218
XII.1 • 206
XIV.9-11 • 206
XV • 248, 308
XVI.4 • 248, 308
XVI.6 • 308
XIX.1 • 206
XXI.3 • 315

The Divine Aurelian

XXX.3 • 260

Xenophon

Agesilaus

7.4 • 258
7.7 • 258

The Education of Cyrus

I.6.6 • 256

Zosimus

New History

I.17.2 • 198
I.18.2-19.2 • 201
I.18.3 • 238
I.28-29 • 197
I.36.2 • 204
I.37-38 • 281
I.37.3 • 205, 209
I.46.2 • 206
I.56.2-3 • 260

General index

Academy • 194, 203, 223
accident see also coincidence and randomness • 31, 42, 48-52, 59, 125, 197-98, 229, 239-40, 244
Acilia sarcophagus • 310
action see also activity and work • 143, 150, 163, 174, 184-87, 222, 230, 239, 255-56, 277-78, 281, 283
activity • 34, 59, 95-96, 144, 146, 170, 173-75, 177, 180, 184, 186, 269, 274, 278, 281, 318
Adamson, P.S. • 13
administration • 222, 228, 312
Aemilian • 197
aetiology see cause and reason (*aitia*)
after-image • 66, 69, 72
Agamemnon • 188, 249, 273
al-Ambâr • 200
Alcidamas • 216
Alexander of Aphrodisias • 12, 88, 141, 151, 178
Alexander the Great • 198, 218, 223, 312
Alexandria • 93, 134, 193, 199-200, 202-04, 217, 221, 270, 318
Alföldi, A. • 192, 204, 220-21, 232, 236, 244, 248-49, 259, 261-263, 281, 287, 294, 304, 309, 311-12
al-Marwâniyya • 202
Amelius • 75, 196, 203, 205, 218, 261, 263, 292-94, 301, 305
Amerius see also Amelius • 75
Ammonius Saccas • 134, 193-94, 203-04, 217, 260, 262-63, 272, 289, 318
amnesia • 25
Amphiclea • 270, 272
Anaxagoras • 54, 60, 192
Anaximander • 125, 235
Andreae, B. • 288, 300-04, 307, 314
animal see also beast and Living Being(s) • 90, 238, 248-49, 260, 282, 316
annihilation • 17, 24, 94-95, 101, 106, 159-60, 320
Anselm • 281
anti-Aristotelianism • 295
Antigone • 264
antilêpsis • 185
Antioch • 93, 199, 261
anti-Semitism • 212
Apamea • 261
Aphrodite • 142, 188, 270
Apollo • 62, 176, 195-96, 211, 235, 257, 266, 297, 305, 317
apotheosis • 224, 226, 249
Apuleius • 198, 217
Aquae Vescinae • 195
Aquinas see Thomism
Arabs • 201, 204, 220, 238, 261
arbitrariness • 11, 17, 58-60, 96, 138-42, 155, 166, 169, 174, 203, 237, 243, 267
arbitrator • 196, 248
Archeanassa • 271
Archimedes • 60, 175, 181
Archytas • 215

aristocracy • 12, 196, 205, 257, 263
Aristotelianism • *passim*
Aristotle • *passim*
Arius Didymus • 223
armoury • 78, 238-40, 243
Armstrong, A.H. • *passim*
army • 195-96, 198-203, 206, 229-30, 259
Arnou, R. • 10, 70, 95, 167, 255
art • 12, 77, 144-45, 215, 222, 228-29, 266, 287-88, 295, 304, 309-10, 313, 317
Asia Minor • 196, 223
Aspasia • 270, 301
assembly see also council and senate • 253-54, 266
atheism • 85
Athanasius • 93
Athenodorus • 223
Athens • 203, 216, 257-60, 262-63, 268, 281, 318
Atlantis • 260, 264
atomism • 99, 170, 282
atrocity • 239
Augustine • 11, 92-93, 95, 130, 257, 260, 281-82, 318
Augustus • 223, 249, 312
Aurelian • 220
autocracy see also dominate and kingship • 221, 264
autonomy • 207-08, 260
Averroism • 31, 101
axiarchy • 140
axiology see value and worth • 178, 226
Babylon • 197, 221, 257
Bacon, F. • 35
Baghdad • 200
Balbinus • 308-09
beast see also animal • 80, 117-18, 238, 257
Beautiful, the • 57-58, 70, 78-79, 102, 114, 219, 227, 265, 272, 317
Becker, O. • 212
Beierwaltes, W. • *passim*
Being see Substance (Form)
Beth Shean • 261
Bilde, P. • 14
Birk Toft, S. • 295
birth • 19, 46, 150, 153, 243, 264, 273
bisexuality • 236
Bishapur • 220
Blakeley, D.N. • 39, 59, 71, 96, 98, 101, 116, 160, 282
Blumenthal, H.J. • 9-10, 25-26, 32, 34-35, 68, 70, 79, 101, 110, 151, 167, 195, 198, 203
Bobzien, S. • 12, 151-52, 178-79
Bohemia • 315
boldness • 66, 111, 113, 123, 138, 167, 169, 176
Bracker, J. • 285, 296, 307, 311
brother sarcophagus • 272, 310, 316
Brown, P. • 13, 273
Buddha • 194, 212
Bussanich, J. • 17, 20-21, 59-62, 64, 66-67, 71, 79, 95-96, 99, 159, 175
Caesar • 221, 249
Caesarea • 199
Caesarion • 221
calculation see intellect (discursive)
Campania • 195, 204-08, 220, 238, 273
Caracalla • 196, 250
Caramella, S. • 192, 212
Carinus • 310, 312-13
Carone, G.R. • 9, 11, 31, 54, 56, 94, 98, 101-02, 104, 106, 110
Carterius • 305

Carthage • 205
Castor and Pollux • 297
Castricius Firmius • 196, 204-05, 208, 307
Cato • 251
causa sui see self-causation
cause • *passim*
cavalry see equestrian
cave, simile of the • 28, 46, 106, 234, 278-79, 284
centre see also circle • 64, 76, 83, 107-09, 114, 117, 155-56, 185, 214, 219-20, 307
Cephalus • 243
Chalcis • 261
chance see randomness
children see also birth and heredity • 187, 197, 199, 241, 243, 254, 265, 273, 278
Chione • 271
choice • 11, 17, 22, 43, 47, 96, 127, 139, 150-53, 166, 179, 224, 240, 243, 259, 286, 313
Christianity • 11, 46, 92-93, 96-97, 130, 134, 138-39, 142, 167-68, 212, 218, 276, 282, 284, 286, 308, 318
Chrysippus • 230, 251
church • 92, 195, 257, 282
Cicero • 99, 220, 254, 265, 268-69
Circesium • 201-02
circle see also centre • 83, 107-09, 114, 185, 214, 219
citizenship • 192, 194, 196, 203, 206, 208, 220, 239, 248, 250-51, 266, 268, 279, 283, 291, 305-06, 309-310, 315
class (social) • 195, 205, 271, 309
Clement of Alexandria • 217
Cleopatra • 221
coincidence see also accident and randomness • 61, 126, 135, 166-69, 171, 193, 204, 240, 244, 248
colour • 32, 51, 117, 287
Communism • 213
community • 192, 207, 231, 245, 258, 268, 276
conservatism • 12, 92, 211-12, 263
consul • 196, 206, 264, 310
cooperativeness • 12, 208, 268
Copernicus • 60
Coriscus • 223
council (Athenian) • 216
council (imperial) • 223, 309
council (nocturnal) see also assembly and senate • 254
courage • 239-40, 243, 251, 279, 283, 304
court (legal) • 206
court (royal, imperial) • 192, 197, 207, 217-19, 226, 249, 311
cowardice • 239-40
craftsman • 113, 151, 216, 222, 230, 275
cremation • 249, 308
crime • 234, 236, 241
Ctesiphon • 200
custom • 220-21, 252-53, 297, 308
Cynicism • 192, 213, 223, 245, 247, 265, 274
daimonion see also guardian spirit • 153
dance • 24, 108, 136, 241, 284
Decius • 308
defence • 237-38, 258, 259, 262, 277, 320
deification • 233
delation • 234
Delphi see also oracle • 72, 196

democracy • 12, 232, 252, 257, 263-65, 268-69, 277
Democritus • 72
Descartes, R. • 130
descent • 10, 12-13, 23, 46, 61, 66-67, 86, 113, 143-46, 151, 153, 157, 183, 196, 234, 236, 279, 283
desire • 75-76, 80, 90, 111, 117, 161, 170, 173, 179, 182, 184, 254, 256, 276, 315
determinant • 11, 169-71, 177, 179, 184, 320
dianoia see intellect (discursive)
Dicearchia • 207
dictatorship see also tyranny • 211, 265
Difference (Form) • 24, 75, 102-03, 111-13, 115
differentia • 34, 50-51, 103, 112
dignitary • 288, 307, 318
dignity see worth • 96, 203, 219
Dio Chrysostom • 223
Diocletian • 193
Diodorus Cronus • 161, 230
Diogenes Laertius • 246
Diomedes • 78
Dionysius II • 209, 224
Dionysodorus • 103
Diotima • 246, 270, 301
Diotogenes • 217
discursive reasoning see intellect (discursive)
disposition • 11, 78, 149-56, 243, 255
divination • 196
divisibility • 98-99, 116, 319
dominate see also autocracy and kingship • 220
Dominici, Giovanni • 192
Domitius Philippus • 200
Donatus • 281
Dörrie, H. • 143, 152, 214, 217-18, 220
Dura-Europus • 201
eagle • 249
Ecphantus • 217, 249
Edessa • 204
education • 242, 269, 282, 292, 315
effeminacy • 236
egalitarianism see also equality • 12, 226-27, 244
egoism see self-love
Egypt • 193, 197, 199-200, 202, 218, 294, 320
eidos see form (Aristotelian), Form (Platonic) and genus/species
eidos atomon • 99
Elea • 207, 233, 266
emanation • 137, 160, 319
emancipation see also liberation • 162-63, 268, 274
Emesa • 260
Empedocles • 72, 233-34, 237
empowerment • 182
Engels, F. • 227
envy • 227
eph' hêmin see self-determination
Epicureanism • 46, 213, 257, 276
epistemology see also science • 42, 54, 72, 105-06, 226-28, 231, 252, 269
equality see also egalitarianism • 88, 225-27, 234, 244, 266, 268
equestrian • 205, 220, 286, 297, 306, 309
Erastus • 223
Erennius • 217
error • 91, 243
eternity • 13, 40, 44, 66, 91, 133, 155, 180, 217, 283, 295, 299, 307, 317
Euphraeus • 223
Euphrates • 202
Eustochius • 193-95, 205, 292

evil • 115, 117-18, 140, 153, 225, 234, 239-41, 243, 246, 264-66, 268, 277, 280-81, 283, 320
exousia • 152, 170, 178, 268
farming • 242, 282
Fars • 220
Fascism • 212
Fate see also fortune • 19, 25, 42-43, 46, 90, 144, 154, 181, 236, 249
father • 91-93, 113-14, 130, 134-35, 188, 196-97, 204, 206, 218, 220, 239, 242, 284, 297
fatherland see homeland
feminism see women
Ficino, M. • 130, 191
Fischer-Bossert, W. • 285
Fittschen, K. • 287, 298, 302, 304-07, 309-10, 312-13, 316
form (Aristotelian) • 36
Form (Platonic) • *passim*
fortune see also Fate and treasure • 19, 44, 150, 154, 160, 171, 183, 198, 249, 251, 264-65
freedom (absolute) • 11-12, 46, 74, 141, 162-63, 165, 168-70, 173, 176-85, 268
freedom (democratic) • 268
freedom (exterior) • 268
freedom (inner) • 256, 268
freedom (negative) • 268
freedom (positive) • 268-69
free will • 46, 141, 178-79, 183, 234
friendship see also cooperativeness • 32, 193, 195, 198, 200, 203-09, 212, 223-24, 237-38, 257, 262-63, 265-66, 268, 272-73, 278, 293-94, 305, 307
Friis Johansen, K. • 13, 92, 181
Gallagher, P. • 13
Gallienic renaissance • 287, 314
Gallienus • *passim*
Gallus see Trebonian Gallus
gardening • 21, 218
Gemina • 196-97, 203, 270-71, 273, 297-98, 300-01
generation see also self-generation • 29, 40, 55, 77, 95, 128, 131, 136
genus/species • 29, 33-35, 37, 53, 99, 129, 149, 212, 238, 288
Georgism • 244
Gerson, L.P. • 33, 40, 48, 70-71, 98, 104, 124, 134-35, 285, 295
Gibbon, E. • 191, 248
Glaucon • 77, 117-18
Glaucus (merman) • 118
Glaucus (warrior) • 79
Glockner, H. • 212
gnoseology • 72, 227
Gnosticism • 12, 96-97, 130, 134, 145, 167-68, 226-27, 244, 318
gods • 24, 36, 43, 69, 79, 82, 84, 96, 110, 113, 141, 143, 181, 215, 239, 244, 253, 257
gold • 77-79, 82, 242, 308-09
Good, the • *passim*
Gordian III • 194-95, 198, 200-03, 218, 220, 310, 313
grace • 58-59, 96, 203, 221, 254, 281-82, 300
Great Mother • 272
Gregersen, N.H. • 14
guardians • 197, 233, 260, 265, 275
guardian spirit • 82-83, 153, 155-56, 176, 224, 257, 317
Hadot, P. • 10-11, 21, 27, 62-63, 68, 70, 72, 104, 109, 130, 134, 159-60, 232
Hadrian • 259, 312, 314
Hannestad, N. • 14, 312
happiness see well-being

Harder, R. • 193-97, 199-200, 202, 211-12, 217
Harrow, A. • 14
Hartmann, N. • 213
hedonism • 257
Hegel, G.W.F. • 212
Heinemann, F. • 32, 38, 71, 204, 206-07, 219, 263, 281
heliocentrism • 60
hen amphô • 104, 174
Henry, D. • 14
Henry, P. • 45, 99, 105, 137, 141, 164-65, 167, 171, 178-79
helpfulness see cooperativeness
Heracles • 80
Heraclitus • 44, 85-87, 176, 213, 225-26, 233, 235, 237-38, 241, 252, 257, 266-67, 269, 274, 282
Herculaneum • 207
heredity see also inheritance • 243, 243, 264
Hermes • 272
Hermias of Atarneus • 223
Herodes of Atticus • 242
Herodotus • 196, 220
Herostratus • 224
Hesiod • 66, 196, 234, 283
hindrance • 68, 160, 162, 166, 184, 242, 275
Hippolytus • 130, 167
Hitler, A. • 211
hoion • 52, 56, 59, 63, 66-67, 69-70, 84, 88, 106, 110, 114, 124, 132, 137, 166, 179
Holy Spirit see also Trinity • 92, 212
homeland • 83, 192, 229, 231-32, 258, 261-62, 278, 280, 320
homosexuality • 271, 273
honour • 84, 196-97, 202, 219, 226, 231, 250, 271, 305, 307
Hostilian • 308, 310
house • 43, 62, 81, 188, 196-97, 203-04, 239, 259, 267, 269-70, 315
Hume, D. • 60, 166, 194
hûpostasis • 63, 88, 93, 136
Hypatia • 270
Iamblichus • 130, 144, 152, 261, 272
idea see also Form (Platonic) • 32, 36
identity of indiscernibles • 10-11, 33-34, 37, 50, 54-55, 63, 66, 78, 102, 104, 106-07, 112, 114, 124-26, 134, 144, 146, 151, 154, 158, 182-83, 279, 283, 319
idiôs poion • 32, 52
imagination • 25, 53, 69, 72, 85, 162, 226-27, 253
Immobility • 98, 107, 119, 175-76, 180, 185, 219
immortality • 20, 24, 32, 36, 48, 56, 56, 97, 113, 117-18, 130, 226, 247
imperialism • 12, 212, 259
incest • 113
inclination • 17, 132, 155, 278-79
incompatibilism • 138, 167, 169, 268
independence • 123-24
indeterminism • 11, 151, 167
individualism • 209, 277
individuation • 35, 152
indivisibility • 35, 76, 99, 172, 319
inequality • 12, 141, 150, 225-26, 228, 268, 320
Inescapability • 154, 234-36, 250, 265, 279
in-esse predication • 48-53, 83, 125, 155, 160, 161, 166, 319
infima species • 33, 53, 99
ingenuity • 242, 246

inheritance see also heredity • 204, 242-43
Institut für Indogermanische Geistesgeschichte • 212
intellect (discursive) • 23, 28, 30, 38-40, 50, 54, 80-83, 90-91, 94, 101, 117, 153, 253, 284
Intellect (non-discursive, particular) • 9-10, 24-27, 30-31, 33-36, 38-39, 41, 55, 81, 106, 110, 118, 149, 159, 184, 319
Intellect (non-discursive, universal) • *passim*
intention (philosophical) • 39
intercourse • 82, 95, 118, 243, 271-72
Islam • 62, 276
Isles of the Blest • 83, 295, 299
Ithaca • 231
Jerphagnon, L. • 192, 195, 204, 211, 263
Jerusalem • 257
Jesus Christ • 93, 221, 293
Judaism • 96-97, 134, 139, 167-68, 212, 217-18, 232, 276
judgement • 46, 130, 152, 234
Julian the Apostate • 202, 236, 261-62
justice • 77-78, 117, 154, 215, 221, 234-37, 240-41, 250, 255, 257, 267, 276, 280-82
Kähler, H. • 296, 307, 310-11, 315
katanoêsis • 66
Katz, A.L. • 192, 213, 227
"king of kings" • 219, 221, 259, 304
kingship • 12, 216-17, 221, 223, 228-29, 231, 247, 260, 263-65
Klostergaard Petersen, A. • 14
Krasilnikoff, J. • 14
Landino, C. • 254
law by convention • 46, 143, 233-234, 240, 252
law of causation • 129, 234, 282
law of nature • 252
laziness • 82, 144, 237, 245
Ledbetter, G.M. • 126
Leibniz, G.W. • 13, 25, 33-34, 41, 47-48, 52-53, 124-26, 223, 281, 319-20
Levy, D. • 14
liberality • 141, 283
liberation • 12, 161, 181, 258, 274-75, 284, 320
liberator • 162, 274, 283
libertarianism • 12, 177, 244
light • 27-28, 57-60, 64-65, 74, 94-95, 188, 284
'like by like' • 72, 85, 91
limitlessness • 86
line, analogy of the divided • 23, 25, 27-28, 30, 37
lines • 83, 109
lion • 80, 117, 304
Liris • 195
Living Being(s) see also animal • 29, 34, 40, 47, 81, 88, 182, 238, 282
Locke, J. • 25, 274
loneliness • 25, 58, 68, 73-74, 78-79, 82, 96, 102, 106, 113, 116, 129, 133, 162, 181-82, 275
Longinus • 130, 203, 260-63, 293, 318
L'Orange, H.P. • 285-86, 295, 306-07, 312
Ludovisi sarcophagus • 294, 308, 310
Luther, M. • 280
Lyco(polis) • 193
maggots • 21
Magi • 198
magic • 20, 245
Malcus • 218
Mamo, P. • 10, 32, 59, 71, 86, 102, 106, 108

man (inner) • 80, 118, 181, 247
man (true) • 80-81
Mani • 197-98
Manichaeism • 257
Marcellus Orrontius • 196, 261, 307
Marcus Aurelius • 223
Marius Victorinus • 130-31, 134
marriage • 197, 242-43, 265, 273-74, 278, 315-16
marriage sarcophagus • 309
Marx, K. • 227
Master Argument see Diodorus Cronus
mastery • 74, 139, 141, 170, 182, 188, 219, 229, 275
materialism • 25, 103, 227, 257
McCabe, M.M. • 13, 98, 105, 107, 279
measure • 12, 44-45, 61, 85, 88, 96, 124, 130, 160, 179, 226, 235, 240, 248, 252, 275, 281
memory • 25-26, 114, 144
meritocracy • 144, 205, 226
Mesopotamia • 193, 198-202, 204, 221, 262, 304
Milan • 281, 306
Minos • 232, 271, 278
Minturnae • 195, 204-05
Misiche see Pirisabora
mixed constitution • 12, 263, 265, 269
mob • 225, 229, 245, 257, 259, 268
moderation • 29, 219, 263, 277
Monad • 130
monadology • 32-33, 35, 41, 47-48, 52-53, 320
Monarchianism • 134
monarchy see kingship
monism • 10, 17, 59, 62, 66, 70-71, 93, 96, 160, 278
Montesquieu, C.L. de S. • 253
monument • 249, 285, 305, 308-09, 311, 315
mortality • 20, 204, 216, 231, 238, 249-50, 264-65, 281
motion see also self-motion • 24, 107-08, 111, 165, 170, 173-77, 180, 212, 278
Munchausen • 129
murder • 197, 201-03, 205, 241, 246, 248, 253, 261, 307-08
Muses • 291, 297-98, 311, 316-17
mysticism • 9, 17, 59, 61-62, 66, 68, 70-71, 94, 102, 105
Naqs-i-Rustam • 200
nationality see also homeland • 212, 238, 253
Nature • 136, 159, 222, 230, 253-54
Nausicaä • 187
Nazism • 211-13, 223, 232, 238, 276
Nebuchadnezzar • 221
Neopythagoreanism see Pythagoreanism
Nero • 223
Noetus • 134
non-identity of cause and effect • 49, 170-71, 241
non-identity of discernibles • 9-12, 17, 22, 24, 26, 29, 31, 34-35, 37, 40, 44, 50, 52, 70, 78, 107-08, 110, 112, 124-25, 146, 150, 152, 297, 319
Noricum • 315
Numenius • 134, 217, 232, 261, 289
Ocellus Lucanus • 215
ochlocracy see mob
Odaenathus • 221, 260
O'Daly, G.J.P. • 10, 66, 70, 79, 86, 91, 99, 101-02
Odysseus • 187, 229, 231, 261
office • 192, 224, 228, 239, 243, 247-48, 259, 264, 269, 310

Okamura, L. • 195, 198, 200-02
O'Meara, D.J. • 10, 13, 33, 35, 62, 70, 93, 99, 141, 159, 192, 232, 275-76, 278-79
O'Meara, J.J. • 93
One, the see Unity (pure)
Onesicritus • 223
Oost, S.I. • 202
opinion • 25, 47, 91, 191, 194, 268
Oppermann, H. • 193, 212
optimats • 205, 257
oracle • 62, 176, 195-96, 201, 209, 211, 231, 235, 257, 266, 305
Order • 45-46, 52-53, 155, 162-63, 184, 233, 245, 320
Origen • 204, 217-18
Orontes • 260-61
Ostia • 285-86
Otherness • 63, 103, 111-12
Pagus Vescinus • 195, 207
Palmyra • 221, 260-63
Pamphylia • 316
Panhellenism • 258
Pannonia • 206
Parfit, D. • 140
Parmenides • 37, 40, 55, 58, 60, 64, 72, 108, 125, 169, 233, 235
particularisation • 21, 117-18
partlessness • 75-76, 78, 81, 88-89, 99, 104, 109, 113-14, 118, 124, 160, 172, 319
passivity • 20, 25, 54, 90, 95, 146, 169-70, 173-75, 177, 180, 182, 269, 283
patricians • 205, 220, 257
Paulinus • 206, 261
peculiarity • 19-20, 26, 34, 46, 51-53, 83, 242, 277
people, the • 257, 266, 268, 269, 308
Perdiccas • 223
Peregrinus sarcophagus • 286-87, 307, 311
Pergamum • 270
Persepolis • 200
Persia • 194, 197-98, 200-02, 204, 215, 218, 220-22, 236, 261-62, 274, 281
personhood • 93
persuasion • 133, 140, 166, 174, 179, 219, 261
Phaeacians • 231
phaulos see laziness
philhellenism • 204, 258, 263, 287, 308, 312, 314
Philip the Arab • 201-03, 220, 238, 258-59
Philip II of Macedon • 223
philistine • 248, 276
Philo • 139, 217, 232
Phoenicia • 200, 218, 238, 262
physician • 193, 195, 204-06, 208, 222, 230, 238, 261, 292
piety • 142-43, 145
Pipa(ra) • 315
Pirisabora • 200
plague • 205-07, 315
plant • 21, 90, 208, 284
Plato • *passim*
Platonism • *passim*
Platonopolis • 207-09, 213, 231, 248, 260, 263, 268
Plotina • 195
pneuma see also Holy Spirit and Trinity • 212
Pompeii • 207
Popper, K.R. • 276
Porphyry • *passim*
porphyry • 4, 218
Posidonius • 261
poverty • 243-45, 280, 283

praefect • 196, 198, 200-01
Praetextatus catacomb • 304, 308-09
praetorians • 198, 201, 206, 286
predetermination • 22, 50, 151-53, 155, 160, 163, 169, 181, 183, 320
pre-established harmony • 49
preference • 11, 75, 144, 147, 149-51, 152-55, 243, 276, 319
Priam • 264-65
principate • 220, 264, 269
Priscus • 201
proactivity • 82-83, 144, 161, 176, 255, 266, 277
Probus • 312-13
Proclus • 10, 90-92, 131, 144, 152
prohairesis see preference
property • 51, 72, 199, 202, 204-05, 242, 245, 258, 260, 264, 278
prostitution • 198, 270
prostration • 219-21
proto-Intellect • 68
Proudhon, P.J. • 245
Providence • *passim*
Pseudo-Aristides • 223
Pugliese Carratelli, G. • 192, 207-08
punishment • 154, 206, 234-37, 246, 250, 282
purple see porphyry
Puteoli • 195, 207
Pythagoras • 44, 213, 235, 246
Pythagoreanism • 130, 134, 138-39, 167-68, 187, 207, 215, 217-18, 233, 249, 252, 263
Quality (Form) • 52, 149
quality (sensible) • 52
Quietude • 21, 82-83, 106, 176
racism • 212, 238
randomness • 61, 74, 105, 132, 135-36, 139, 154, 162, 171, 242
Rankov, B. • 249
rape • 239, 241, 264
rational formative principle (*logos spermatikos*) • 52, 263
ratio sui see reason for itself
Realpolitik • 209, 211, 213
reason (*aitia*) • *passim*
reason (*dianoia*) see intellect (discursive)
reason (*logos*) • 51, 66, 86, 164, 167, 184, 217, 233, 317
reason for itself • 131, 137, 319
recollection • 25-26, 38, 59, 114, 272
recurrence • 44-45, 283
Renaissance, the see also Gallienic renaissance • 130, 191, 254, 277
responsibility see also cause and reason (*aitia*) • 45, 126-27, 147, 150, 183, 208, 244, 286
rhetoric • 205, 216, 228, 242, 268-69, 291
Right (*Themis*) • 235
right moment see also measure • 139, 281
right of nature • 237
Rist, J.M. • *passim*
Rodenwaldt, G. • 287-88, 291, 296, 301, 305-06, 311-12, 314, 318
Rogatianus • 196, 206, 209, 267, 307
Rome • *passim*
Rosenberg, A. • 211-12
Rousseau, J.-J. • 245
Rudberg, G. • 212, 248, 263
Sabinillus • 196, 206, 307
sage • 48, 146, 216-17, 226, 231, 245-48, 250-51, 253, 255-58, 265, 268, 280-81
Salonina • 204, 270, 296-98, 300, 314-16
Saloninus Gallienus • 206

Sameness (Form) • 75, 103, 226
sanctuary • 81-82
Sapor I • 197, 200-01, 204, 220-21
Schopenhauer, A. • 125, 129
science • 37, 41, 116, 215, 250, 255
Scythopolis • 261
seat see also throne • 62, 64, 197, 249, 309
Seleucia Pieria • 199
Self (absolute) • *passim*
self-causation • 129-30, 134, 137, 139, 160, 167-70, 177, 277
self-enslavement • 133, 170-71, 177, 275
self-generation • 129-30, 134, 168
self-hatred • 100
self-intellection • 29-30, 37, 90, 165
self-love • 176
self-motion • 91, 171, 177, 180, 185
self-perception • 70
senate see also assembly and council • 194, 196, 202-03, 205, 254, 266, 307-08
Seneca • 32, 223, 234, 251
sensation • 28, 72, 201
Severina • 313-14
Sextus Empiricus • 88
shepherd • 216, 237, 265, 286
ship • 199, 248-49, 259, 269
sibyl see oracle
Sicily • 205, 224, 258, 261-62, 281
Sidamara sarcophagus • 311, 316
Silanion • 291
Simon, E. • 296, 298, 301-02, 305, 307, 311, 314, 316-17
Simonians • 167
simplicity • 55, 67-68, 72, 90, 102, 105, 118, 123-24
Sinuessa • 195
Sirmium • 206
slavery • 12, 165, 169, 170, 182-83, 221-22, 239-40, 253, 267-69, 271, 274-75, 282, 320
social liberalism • 244
Socrates • *passim*
Sol invictus • 249
Solon • 233
Sorabji, R.R.K. • 9, 11, 13, 29, 40, 44, 56, 61, 70, 80-81, 98, 100-01, 103, 112, 144, 186, 274
Sosipatra • 270
soul (particular) • *passim*
Soul (universal) • *passim*
sovereignty • 215, 218, 260
space • 35, 99, 108, 128, 229, 252
Speusippus • 223
Spinozism • 53, 139, 167-68
spoudaios see proactivity and sage
SS • 212, 263
statue • 77-79, 82, 239, 317
Sthenidas • 217
Stillness (Form) • 21, 23, 58, 82, 105-06, 108, 119, 155, 184, 219, 299
Stoicism • 12, 32, 44, 52-53, 82, 88, 131, 143, 145, 166-67, 171, 174, 178, 181-82, 187, 199, 213, 217, 223, 228, 230-31, 234, 240, 244-45, 247, 250-51, 256-57, 259, 265, 276, 283, 289
Strawson, P.F. • 35, 53, 166
subjectivity • 34, 60, 102, 222, 240
subject/object • 10, 37, 53, 54, 55, 70, 99, 165, 174
Substance (Form) • 37, 40, 47, 50-53, 63-66, 69, 75, 88, 99, 116-17, 127, 132-33, 135, 165, 219
substance (sensible) • 32, 47-48, 50, 63, 93, 99, 239

suddenness • 58-59, 61, 81, 94, 201, 205, 213, 242, 281
Suessa Aurunca • 195
sufficiency • 67, 123-24, 131, 139, 142, 170, 177
sufficient condition • 128
sufficient reason • 11, 85, 124-29, 135, 137, 140-43, 145, 154, 157, 163, 174, 236, 244, 281-82, 319
suicide • 251, 261
Suio • 195, 207
sun • 57-58, 60-61, 65, 118, 235, 249, 281, 291, 317
sun, simile of the • 27-28, 39, 42-43, 57-58, 60, 63, 65, 89, 107, 113, 127-28, 135, 156, 284
sûnaitia • 243-44
sûnaition • 244
sûnergon • 244
survival • 94, 240, 256-57, 273-74, 287-88, 305
Syria • 195-96, 198, 200, 205, 221, 261
Tarentum • 215
Telamon • 188
Telemachus • 113
ternary • 92
terror • 212, 277
Tertullian • 92
Teucrus • 188, 273
theft • 43, 236, 243, 245
theism • 10, 17, 57-61, 64-66, 70-71, 93, 96-97, 104, 106, 109, 160, 278
Thomism • 35, 53, 130, 141
Thorsteinson, J. • 14
Thrasymachus • 252
throne see also seat • 300, 310-11
Thucydides • 260
timelessness • 23, 263, 295-96, 315, 317
Timesitheus • 198, 201
timing see right moment
toga • 291, 305, 308-09
totalitarianism • 213, 276
Trajan • 195, 223
Tranquillina • 313
treasure • 242, 244
Trebonian Gallus • 196-97, 297
Trinity • 11, 92-93,
Trojan War • 259
Trouillard, J. • 10, 52, 61-62, 68, 70-71, 79, 91, 115, 134, 137-38, 157, 168, 181
truth • 30, 35, 38, 50, 79, 117, 123, 133, 164, 166, 214-15, 221-23, 228, 233, 235, 246, 253-54, 260, 266, 269, 277, 280
tuberculosis • 206
tûchê see fortune and coincidence
tunic • 291, 305, 308-09
twin • 10, 35, 297, 299-301, 316
typology • 290, 294, 296
tyranny see also dictatorship • 12, 56, 225, 237, 246, 268, 280-82
Tyre • 218, 262, 292
unaffectedness • 47-48
undescendedness • 43-44, 154
unification • *passim*
Unity (pure) • *passim*
unity (subordinate) • *passim*
Unmoved Mover • 28-29, 173, 180
upbringing • 19, 223, 243, 320
Urartu • 221
usurpation • 197, 228, 243, 263
usury • 245
Vaballathus • 260
Vacherot, É. • 9, 33, 71, 79, 94, 98, 100, 103, 114, 141, 150, 164, 226
Valerian Junior • 206
Valerian Senior • 197, 204, 213, 221, 236, 281
vertical causation • 49, 52, 127, 216

Vescia • 207
Via Appia • 304, 308
Via Salaria sarcophagus • 286
Vibia Galla • 197
violence • 211-12, 237, 248, 252, 265
Virgil • 254
virtue (civic) • 245, 248, 255, 276
virtue (intellectual) • 275-76, 283
voluntarism • 138, 168-69
Volusian • 197
von Clausewitz, K. • 237
von Savigny, F.C. • 253
wakefulness • 66, 132, 159, 176, 186
well-being • 48, 83, 162, 242, 280, 284
Westra, L.S. • 86, 138, 167, 192, 256, 282
Whittaker, J. • 130, 134, 166, 168, 193, 198
wholeness • 76
will see also free will • 137, 139, 158, 164, 174, 179, 251, 258, 276
wisdom • 32, 82, 88, 95, 119, 145, 246, 253-55, 280
wise see sage
wish • 68, 139, 208, 269, 285, 307, 314-15
Wittgenstein, L. • 35
wolf • 237
Wolff, C. • 223
women • 270-71, 273, 291, 295, 299-301, 309, 311, 314-17
wonderboy sarcophagus • 287
work (spiritual) • 132, 136, 163, 242, 266
work (manual) • 242, 246, 266
world-periods see recurrence
Wundt, M. • 192, 204, 206-07, 213-14, 219-21, 262-63, 281
Xerxes • 247
Zaitha • 202
Zalmoxis • 48, 215
Zenobia • 260, 262
Zethus • 195-96, 204-06, 208, 238, 261, 272
Zeus • 87, 221, 229-30, 232, 234, 271
Zoticus • 206